THE SECOND CREATIVE PERIOD OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The first half of the nineteenth century records the triumph of Romanticism in literature and of democracy in government; and the two movements are so closely associated, in so many nations and in so many periods of history, that one must wonder if there be not some relation of cause and effect between them. Just as we understand the tremendous energizing influence of Puritanism in the matter of English liberty by remembering that the common people had begun to read, and that their book was the Bible, so we may understand this age of popular government by remembering that the chief subject of romantic literature was the essential nobleness of common men and the value of the individual. As we read now that brief portion of history which lies between the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the English Reform Bill of 1832, we are in the presence of such mighty political upheavals that "the age of revolution" is the only name by which we can adequately characterize it. Its great historic movements become intelligible only when we read what was written in this period; for the French Revolution and the American commonwealth, as well as the establishment of a true democracy in England by the Reform Bill, were the inevitable results of ideas which literature had spread rapidly through the civilized world. Liberty is fundamentally an ideal; and that ideal--beautiful, inspiring, compelling, as a loved banner in the wind--was kept steadily before men's minds by a multitude of books and pamphlets as far apart as Burns's *Poems* and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*,--all read eagerly by the common people, all proclaiming the dignity of common life, and all uttering the same passionate cry against every form of class or caste oppression.

First the dream, the ideal in some human soul; then the written word which proclaims it, and impresses other minds with its truth and beauty; then the united and determined effort of men to make the dream a reality,--that seems to be a fair estimate of the part that literature plays, even in our political progress.

Historical Summary- The period we are considering begins in the latter half of the reign of George III and ends with the accession of Victoria in 1837. When on a foggy morning in November, 1783, King George entered the House of Lords and in a trembling voice recognized the independence of the United States of America, he unconsciously proclaimed the triumph of that free government by free men which had been the ideal of English literature for more than a thousand years; though it was not till 1832, when the Reform Bill became the law of the land, that England herself learned the lesson taught her by America, and became the democracy of which her writers had always dreamed.

The French Revolution-The half century between these two events is one of great turmoil, yet of steady advance in every department of English life. The storm center of the political unrest was the French Revolution, that frightful uprising which proclaimed the natural rights of man and the abolition of class distinctions. Its effect on the whole civilized world is beyond computation. Patriotic clubs and societies multiplied in England, all asserting the doctrine of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the watchwords of the Revolution. Young England, led by Pitt the younger, hailed the new French republic and offered it friendship; old England, which pardons no revolutions but her own, looked with horror on the turmoil in France and, misled by Burke and the nobles of the realm, forced the two nations into war. Even Pitt saw a blessing in this at first; because the sudden zeal for fighting a foreign nation--which by some horrible perversion is generally called patriotism--might turn men's thoughts from their own to their neighbors' affairs, and so prevent a threatened revolution at home.

Economic Conditions- The causes of this threatened revolution were not political but economic. By her invention in steel and machinery, and by her monopoly of the carrying trade, England had become the workshop of the world. Her wealth had increased beyond her wildest dreams; but the unequal distribution of that wealth was a spectacle to make angels weep. The invention of machinery at first threw thousands of skilled hand workers out of employment; in order to protect a few agriculturists, heavy duties were imposed on corn and wheat, and bread rose to famine prices just when laboring men had the least money to pay for it. There followed a curious spectacle. While England increased in wealth, and spent vast sums to support her army and subsidize her allies in Europe, and while nobles, landowners, manufacturers, and merchants lived in increasing luxury, a multitude of skilled laborers were clamoring for work.

Fathers sent their wives and little children into the mines and factories, where sixteen hours' labor would hardly pay for the daily bread; and in every large city were riotous mobs made up chiefly of hungry men and women. It was this unbearable economic condition, and not any political theory, as Burke supposed, which occasioned the danger of another English revolution.

It is only when we remember these conditions that we can understand two books, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, which can hardly be considered as literature, but which exercised an enormous influence in England. Smith was a Scottish thinker, who wrote to uphold the doctrine that labor is the only source of a nation's wealth, and that any attempt to force labor into unnatural channels, or to prevent it by protective duties from freely obtaining the raw materials for its industry, is unjust and destructive. Paine was a curious combination of Jekyll and Hyde, shallow and untrustworthy personally, but with a passionate devotion to popular liberty. His *Rights of Man* published in London in 1791, was like one of Burns' lyric outcries against institutions which oppressed humanity. Coming so soon after the destruction of the Bastille, it added fuel to the flames kindled in England by the French Revolution. The author was driven out of the country, on the curious ground that he endangered the English constitution, but not until his book had gained a wide sale and influence.

Reforms- All these dangers, real and imaginary, passed away when England turned from the affairs of France to remedy her own economic conditions. The long Continental war came to an end with Napoleon's overthrow at Waterloo, in 1815; and England, having gained enormously in prestige abroad, now turned to the work of reform at home. The destruction of the African slave trade; the mitigation of horribly unjust laws, which included poor debtors and petty criminals in the same class; the prevention of child labor; the freedom of the press; the extension of manhood suffrage; the abolition of restrictions against Catholics in Parliament; the establishment of hundreds of popular schools, under the leadership of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster,--these are but a few of the reforms which mark the progress of civilization in a single half century. When England, in 1833, proclaimed the emancipation of all slaves in all her colonies, she unconsciously proclaimed her final emancipation from barbarism.

Romantic Enthusiasm--Literary Characteristics of the Age- It is intensely interesting to note how literature at first reflected the political turmoil of the age; and then, when the turmoil was over and England began her mighty work of reform, how literature suddenly developed a new creative spirit, which shows itself in the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and in the prose of Scott, Jane Austen, Lamb, and De Quincey,--a wonderful group of writers, whose patriotic enthusiasm suggests the Elizabethan days, and whose genius has caused their age to be known as the second creative period of our literature.

Thus in the early days, when old institutions seemed crumbling with the Bastille, Coleridge and Southey formed their youthful scheme of a "Pantisocracy on the banks of the Susquehanna,"--an ideal commonwealth, in which the principles of More's *Utopia* should be put in practice. Even Wordsworth, fired with political enthusiasm, could write,

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.

The essence of Romanticism was, it must be remembered, that literature must reflect all that is spontaneous and unaffected in nature and in man, and be free to follow its own fancy in its own way. We have already noted this characteristic in the work of the Elizabethan dramatists, who followed their own genius in opposition to all the laws of the critics. In Coleridge we see this independence expressed in "Kubla Khan" and "The Ancient Mariner," two dream pictures, one of the populous Orient, the other of the lonely sea. In Wordsworth this literary independence led him inward to the heart of common things. Following his own instinct, as Shakespeare does, he too

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

And so, more than any other writer of the age, he invests the common life of nature, and the souls of common men and women, with glorious significance. These two poets, Coleridge and Wordsworth, best represent the romantic genius of the age in which they lived, though Scott had a greater literary reputation, and Byron and Shelley had larger audiences.

An Age of Poetry- The second characteristic of this age is that it is emphatically an age of poetry. The previous century, with its practical outlook on life, was largely one of prose; but now, as in the Elizabethan Age, the young enthusiasts turned as naturally to poetry as a happy man to singing. The glory of the age is in the poetry of Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Moore, and Southey. Of its prose works, those of Scott alone have attained a very wide reading, though the essays of Charles Lamb and the novels of Jane Austen have slowly won for their authors a secure place in the history of our literature. Coleridge and Southey (who with Wordsworth form the trio of so-called Lake Poets) wrote far more prose than poetry; and Southey's prose is much better than his verse. It was characteristic of the spirit of this age, so different from our own, that Southey could say that, in order to earn money, he wrote in verse "what would otherwise have been better written in prose."

Women as Novelists It was during this period that woman assumed, for the first time, an important place in our literature. Probably the chief reason for this interesting phenomenon lies in the fact that woman was for the first time given some slight chance of education, of entering into the intellectual life of the race; and as is always the case when woman is given anything like a fair opportunity she responded magnificently. A secondary reason may be found in the nature of the age itself, which was intensely emotional. The French Revolution stirred all Europe to its depths, and during the following half century every great movement in literature, as in politics and religion, was characterized by strong emotion; which is all the more noticeable by contrast with the cold, formal, satiric spirit of the early eighteenth century. As woman is naturally more emotional than man, it may well be that the spirit of this emotional age attracted her, and gave her the opportunity to express herself in literature.

As all strong emotions tend to extremes, the age produced a new type of novel which seems rather hysterical now, but which in its own day delighted multitudes of readers whose nerves were somewhat excited, and who reveled in "bogey" stories of supernatural terror.

Mrs. Anne Radcliffe (1764-1823) was one of the most successful writers of this school of exaggerated romance. Her novels, with their azure-eyed heroines, haunted castles, trapdoors, bandits, abductions, rescues in the nick of time, and a general medley of overwrought joys and horrors, were immensely popular, not only with the crowd of novel readers, but also with men of unquestioned literary genius, like Scott and Byron. In marked contrast to these extravagant stories is the enduring work of Jane Austen, with her charming descriptions of everyday life, and of Maria Edgeworth, whose wonderful pictures of Irish life suggested to Walter Scott the idea of writing his Scottish romances. Two other women who attained a more or less lasting fame were Hannah More, poet, dramatist, and novelist, and Jane Porter, whose *Scottish Chiefs* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw* are still in demand in our libraries. Beside these were Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay) and several other writers whose works, in the early part of the nineteenth century, raised woman to the high place in literature which she has ever since maintained.

The Modern Magazines In this age literary criticism became firmly established by the appearance of such magazines as the *Edinburgh Review* (18O2), *The Quarterly Review* (1808),*Blackwood's Magazine* (1817), the *Westminster Review* (1824), *The Spectator* (1828), *The Athenæum* (1828), and *Fraser's Magazine* (1830). These magazines, edited by such men as Francis Jeffrey, John Wilson (who is known to us as Christopher North), and John Gibson Lockhart, who gave us the *Life of Scott*, exercised an immense influence on all subsequent literature. At first their criticisms were largely destructive, as when Jeffrey hammered Scott, Wordsworth, and Byron most unmercifully; and Lockhart could find no good in either Keats or Tennyson; but with added wisdom, criticism assumed its true function of construction. And when these magazines began to seek and to publish the works of unknown writers, like Hazlitt, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt, they discovered the chief mission of the modern magazine, which is to give every writer of ability the opportunity to make his work known to the world.

I. THE POETS OF ROMANTICISM

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)-It was in 1797 that the new Romantic Movement in our literature assumed definite form. Wordsworth and Coleridge retired to the Quantock Hills, Somerset, and there formed the deliberate purpose to make literature "adapted to interest mankind permanently," which, they declared, classic poetry could never do. Helping the two poets was Wordsworth's sister Dorothy, with a woman's love for flowers and all beautiful things; and a woman's divine sympathy for human life even in its lowliest forms. Though a silent partner, she furnished perhaps the largest share of the inspiration which resulted in the famous *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798. In their partnership Coleridge was to take up the "supernatural, or at least romantic"; while Wordsworth was "to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday ... by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us." The whole spirit of their work is reflected in two poems of this remarkable little volume, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," which is Coleridge's masterpiece, and "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," which expresses Wordsworth's poetical creed, and which is one of the noblest and most significant of our poems. That the *Lyrical Ballads* attracted no attention, and was practically ignored by a public that would soon go into raptures over Byron's *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*, is of small consequence. Many men will hurry a mile to see skyrockets, who never notice Orion and the Pleiades from their own doorstep. Had Wordsworth and Coleridge written only this one little book, they would still be among the representative writers of an age that proclaimed the final triumph of Romanticism.

Life of Wordsworth- To understand the life of him who, in Tennyson's words, "uttered nothing base," it is well to read first *The Prelude*, which records the impressions made upon Wordsworth's mind from his earliest recollection until his full manhood, in 1805, when the poem was completed. Outwardly his long and uneventful life divides itself naturally into four periods: (1) his childhood and youth, in the Cumberland Hills, from 1770 to 1787; (2) a period of uncertainty, of storm and stress, including his university life at Cambridge, his travels abroad, and his revolutionary experience, from 1787 to 1797; (3) a short but significant period of finding himself and his work, from 1797 to 1799; (4) a long period of retirement in the northern lake region, where he was born, and where for a full half century he lived so close to nature that her influence is reflected in all his poetry. When one has outlined these four periods he has told almost all that can be told of a life which is marked, not by events, but largely by spiritual experiences.

Wordsworth was born in 1770 at Cocker mouth, Cumberland, where the Derwent,

Fairest of all rivers, loved; To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,

And from his alder shades and rocky falls, And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice That flowed along my dreams.

It is almost a shock to one who knows Wordsworth only by his calm and noble poetry to read that he was of a moody and violent temper, and that his mother despaired of him alone among her five children. She died when he was but eight years old, but not till she had exerted an influence which lasted all his life, so that he could remember her as "the heart of all our learnings and our loves." The father died some six years later, and the orphan was taken in charge by relatives, who sent him to school at Hawkshead, in the beautiful lake region. Here, apparently, the unroofed school of nature attracted him more than the discipline of the classics, and he learned more eagerly from the flowers and hills and stars than from his books; but one must read Wordsworth's own record, in *The Prelude*, to appreciate this. Three things in this poem must impress even the casual reader: first, Wordsworth loves to be alone, and is never lonely, with nature; second, like every other child who spends much time alone in the woods and fields, he feels the presence of some living spirit, real though unseen, and companionable though silent; third, his impressions are exactly like our own, and delightfully familiar. When he tells of the long summer day spent in swimming, basking in the sun, and questing over the hills; or of the winter night when, on his skates, he chased the reflection of a star in the black ice; or of his exploring the lake in a boat, and getting suddenly frightened when the world grew big and strange,--in all this he is simply recalling a multitude of our own vague, happy memories of childhood. He goes out into the woods at night to tend his woodcock snares; he runs across another boy's snares, follows them, finds a woodcock caught, takes it, hurries away through the night. And then,

I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion.

That is like a mental photograph. Any boy who has come home through the woods at night will recognize it instantly. Again he tells as of going bird's-nesting on the cliffs:

Oh, when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill-sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag,--oh, at that time,
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind

Blow through my ear! The sky seemed not a sky
Of earth,--and with what motion moved the clouds!

No man can read such records without finding his own boyhood again, and his own abounding joy of life, in the poet's early impressions.

The second period of Wordsworth's life begins with his university course at Cambridge, in 1787. In the third book of *The Prelude* we find a dispassionate account of student life, with its trivial occupations, its pleasures and general aimlessness. Wordsworth proved to be a very ordinary scholar, following his own genius rather than the curriculum, and looking forward more eagerly to his vacation among the hills than to his examinations. Perhaps the most interesting thing in his life at Cambridge was his fellowship with the young political enthusiasts, whose spirit is expressed in his remarkable poem on the French Revolution,--a poem which is better than a volume of history to show the hopes and ambitions that stirred all Europe in the first days of that mighty upheaval. Wordsworth made two trips to France, in 1790 and 1791, seeing things chiefly through the rosy spectacles of the young Oxford Republicans. On his second visit he joined the Girondists, or the moderate Republicans, and only the decision of his relatives, who cut off his allowance and hurried him back to England, prevented his going headlong to the guillotine with the leaders of his party. Two things rapidly cooled Wordsworth's revolutionary enthusiasm, and ended the only dramatic interest of his placid life. One was the excesses of the Revolution itself, and especially the execution of Louis XVI; the other was the rise of Napoleon, and the slavish adulation accorded by France to this most vulgar and dangerous of tyrants. His coolness soon grew to disgust and opposition, as shown by his subsequent poems; and this brought upon him the censure of Shelley, Byron, and other extremists, though it gained the friendship of Scott, who from the first had no sympathy with the Revolution or with the young English enthusiasts.

Of the decisive period of Wordsworth's life, when he was living with his sister Dorothy and with Coleridge at Alfoxden, we have already spoken. The importance of this decision to give himself to poetry is evident when we remember that, at thirty years of age, he was without money or any definite aim or occupation in life. He considered the law, but confessed he had no sympathy for its contradictory precepts and practices; he considered the ministry, but though strongly inclined to the Church, he felt himself not good enough for the sacred office; once he had wanted to be a soldier and serve his country, but had wavered at the prospect of dying of disease in a foreign land and throwing away his life without glory or profit to anybody. An apparent accident, which looks more to us like a special Providence, determined his course. He had taken care of a young friend, Raisley Calvert, who died of consumption and left Wordsworth heir to a few hundred pounds, and to the request that he should give his life to poetry. It was this unexpected gift which enabled Wordsworth to retire from the world and follow his genius. All his life he was poor, and lived in an atmosphere of plain living and high thinking. His poetry brought him almost nothing in the way of money rewards, and it was only by a series of happy accidents that he was enabled to continue his work. One of these accidents was that he became a Tory, and soon accepted the office of a distributor of stamps, and was later appointed poet laureate by the government,--which occasioned Browning's famous but ill-considered poem of "The Lost Leader":

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat.

The last half century of Wordsworth's life, in which he retired to his beloved lake district and lived successively at Grasmere and Rydal Mount, remind one strongly of Browning's long struggle for literary recognition.

It was marked by the same steadfast purpose, the same trusted ideal, the same continuous work, and the same tardy recognition by the public. His poetry was mercilessly ridiculed by nearly all the magazine critics, who seized upon the worst of his work as a standard of judgment; and book after book of poems appeared without meeting any success save the approval of a few loyal friends. Without doubt or impatience he continued his work, trusting to the future to recognize and approve it. His attitude here reminds one strongly of the poor old soldier whom he met in the hills, who refused to beg or to mention his long service or the neglect of his country, saying with noble simplicity,

My trust is in the God of Heaven
And in the eye of him who passes me.

Such work and patience are certain of their reward, and long before Wordsworth's death he felt the warm sunshine of general approval. The wave of popular enthusiasm for Scott and Byron passed by, as their limitations were recognized; and Wordsworth was hailed by critics as the first living poet, and one of the greatest that England had ever produced. On the death of Southey (1843) he was made poet laureate, against his own inclination. The late excessive praise left him quite as unmoved as the first excessive neglect. The steady decline in the quality of his work is due not, as might be expected, to self-satisfaction at success, but rather to his intense conservatism, to his living too much alone and failing to test his work by the standards and judgment of other literary men. He died tranquilly in 1850, at the age of eighty years, and was buried in the churchyard at Grasmere.

Such is the brief outward record of the world's greatest interpreter of nature's message; and only one who is acquainted with both nature and the poet can realize how inadequate is any biography; for the best thing about Wordsworth must always remain unsaid. It is a comfort to know that his life, noble, sincere, "heroically happy," never contradicted his message. Poetry was his life; his soul was in all his work; and only by reading what he has written can we understand the man.

The Poetry of Wordsworth There is often a sense of disappointment when one reads Wordsworth for the first time; and this leads us to speak first of two difficulties which may easily prevent a just appreciation of the poet's worth. The first difficulty is in the reader, who is often puzzled by Wordsworth's absolute simplicity. We are so used to stage effects in poetry, that beauty unadorned is apt to escape our notice,--like Wordsworth's "Lucy":

A violet by a mossy stone, Half hidden from the eye;
Fair as a star, when only one Is shining in the sky.

Wordsworth set himself to the task of freeing poetry from all its "conceits," of speaking the language of simple truth, and of portraying man and nature as they are; and in this good work we are apt to miss the beauty, the passion, the intensity, that hide themselves under his simplest lines. The second difficulty is in the poet, not in the reader. It must be confessed that Wordsworth is not always melodious; that he is seldom graceful, and only occasionally inspired. When he is inspired, few poets can be compared with him; at other times the bulk of his verse is so wooden and prosy that we wonder how a poet could have written it. Moreover he is absolutely without humor, and so he often fails to see the small step that separates the sublime from the ridiculous. In no other way can we explain "The Idiot Boy," or pardon the serious absurdity of "Peter Bell" and his grieving jackass.

Poems of Nature- On account of these difficulties it is well to avoid at first the longer works and begin with a good book of selections. When we read these exquisite shorter poems, with their noble lines that live forever in our memory, we realize that Wordsworth is the greatest poet of nature that our literature has produced. If we go further, and study the poems that impress us, we shall find four remarkable characteristics:

(1) Wordsworth is sensitive as a barometer to every subtle change in the world about him. In *The Prelude* he compares himself to an æolian harp, which answers with harmony to every touch of the wind; and the figure is strikingly accurate, as well as interesting, for there is hardly a sight or a sound, from a violet to a mountain and from a bird note to the thunder of the cataract, that is not reflected in some beautiful way in Wordsworth's poetry.

(2) Of all the poets who have written of nature there is none that compares with him in the truthfulness of his representation. Burns, like Gray, is apt to read his own emotions into natural objects, so that there is more of the poet than of nature even in his mouse and mountain daisy; but Wordsworth gives you the bird and the flower, the wind and the tree and the river, just as they are, and is content to let them speak their own message.

(3) No other poet ever found such abundant beauty in the common world. He had not only sight, but insight, that is, he not only sees clearly and describes accurately, but penetrates to the heart of things and always finds some exquisite meaning that is not written on the surface. It is idle to specify or to quote lines on flowers or stars, on snow or vapor. Nothing is ugly or commonplace in his world; on the contrary, there is hardly one natural phenomenon which he has not glorified by pointing out some beauty that was hidden from our eyes.

(4) It is the *life* of nature which is everywhere recognized; not mere growth and cell changes, but sentient, personal life; and the recognition of this personality in nature characterizes all the world's great poetry. In his childhood Wordsworth regarded natural objects, the streams, the hills, the flowers, even the winds, as his companions; and with his mature belief that all nature is the reflection of the living God, it was inevitable that his poetry should thrill with the sense of a Spirit that "rolls through all things." Cowper, Burns, Keats, Tennyson,--all these poets give you the outward aspects of nature in varying degrees; but Wordsworth gives you her very life, and the impression of some personal living spirit that meets and accompanies the man who goes alone through the woods and fields. We shall hardly find, even in the philosophy of Leibnitz, or in the nature myths of our Indians, any such impression of living nature as this poet awakens in us. And that suggests another delightful characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry, namely, that he seems to awaken rather than create an impression; he stirs our memory deeply, so that in reading him we live once more in the vague, beautiful wonderland of our own childhood.

Poems of Human Life- Such is the philosophy of Wordsworth's nature poetry. If we search now for his philosophy of human life, we shall find four more doctrines, which rest upon his basal conception that man is not apart from nature, but is the very "life of her life." **(1)** In childhood man is sensitive as a wind harp to all natural influences; he is an epitome of the gladness and beauty of the world. Wordsworth explains this gladness and this sensitiveness to nature by the doctrine that the child comes straight from the Creator of nature:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar: Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness, But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

In this exquisite ode, which he calls "Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" (1807), Wordsworth sums up his philosophy of childhood; and he may possibly be indebted here to the poet Vaughan, who, more than a century before, had proclaimed in "The Retreat" the same doctrine. This kinship with nature and with God, which glorifies childhood, ought to extend through a man's whole life and ennoble it. This is the teaching of "Tintern Abbey," in which the best part of our life is shown to be the result of natural influences.

According to Wordsworth, society and the crowded unnatural life of cities tend to weaken and pervert humanity; and a return to natural and simple living is the only remedy for human wretchedness.

(2) The natural instincts and pleasures of childhood are the true standards of a man's happiness in this life. All artificial pleasures soon grow tiresome. The natural pleasures, which a man so easily neglects in his work, are the chief means by which we may expect permanent and increasing joy. In "Tintern Abbey," "The Rainbow," "Ode to Duty," and "Intimations of Immortality" we see this plain teaching; but we can hardly read one of Wordsworth's pages without finding it slipped in unobtrusively, like the fragrance of a wild flower.

(3) The *truth* of humanity, that is, the common life which labors and loves and shares the general heritage of smiles and tears, is the only subject of permanent literary interest. Burns and the early poets of the Revival began the good work of showing the romantic interest of common life; and Wordsworth continued it in "Michael," "The Solitary Reaper," "To a Highland Girl," "Stepping Westward," *The Excursion*, and a score of lesser poems. Joy and sorrow, not of princes or heroes, but "in widest commonalty spread," are his themes; and the hidden purpose of many of his poems is to show that the keynote of all life is happiness,--not an occasional thing, the result of chance or circumstance, but a heroic thing, to be won, as one would win any other success, by work and patience.

(4) To this natural philosophy of man Wordsworth adds a mystic element, the result of his own belief that in every natural object there is a reflection of the living God. Nature is everywhere transfused and illumined by Spirit; man also is a reflection of the divine Spirit; and we shall never understand the emotions roused by a flower or a sunset until we learn that nature appeals through the eye of man to his inner spirit. In a word, nature must be "spiritually discerned." In "Tintern Abbey" the spiritual appeal of nature is expressed in almost every line; but the mystic conception of man is seen more clearly in "Intimations of Immortality," which Emerson calls "the high-water mark of poetry in the nineteenth century." In this last splendid ode Wordsworth adds to his spiritual interpretation of nature and man the alluring doctrine of pre existence, which has appealed so powerfully to Hindoo and Greek in turn, and which makes of human life a continuous, immortal thing, without end or beginning.

The Recluse Wordsworth's longer poems, since they contain much that is prosy and uninteresting, may well be left till after we have read the odes, sonnets, and short descriptive poems that have made him famous. As showing a certain heroic cast of Wordsworth's mind, it is interesting to learn that the greater part of his work, including *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*, was intended for a place in a single great poem, to be called *The Recluse*, which should treat of nature, man, and society. *The Prelude*, treating of the growth of a poet's mind, was to introduce the work. The *Home at Grasmere*, which is the first book of *The Recluse*, was not published till 1888, long after the poet's death. *The Excursion* (1814) is the second book of *The Recluse*; and the third was never completed, though Wordsworth intended to include most of his shorter poems in this third part, and so make an immense personal epic of a poet's life and work. It is perhaps just as well that the work remained unfinished. The best of his work appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) and in the sonnets, odes, and lyrics of the next ten years; though "The Duddon Sonnets" (1820), "To a Skylark" (1825), and "Yarrow Revisited" (1831) show that he retained till past sixty much of his youthful enthusiasm. In his later years, however, he perhaps wrote too much; his poetry, like his prose, becomes dull and unimaginative; and we miss the flashes of insight, the tender memories of childhood, and the recurrence of noble lines--each one a poem--that constitutes the surprise and the delight of reading Wordsworth.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.
In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart--
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear.

In the wonderful "Ode to Dejection," from which the above fragment is taken, we have a single strong impression of Coleridge's whole life,--a sad, broken, tragic life, in marked contrast with the peaceful existence of his friend Wordsworth. For himself, during the greater part of his life, the poet had only grief and remorse as his portion; but for everybody else, for the audiences that were charmed by the brilliancy of his literary lectures, for the friends who gathered about him to be inspired by his ideals and conversation, and for all his readers who found unending delight in the little volume which holds his poetry, he had and still has a cheering message, full of beauty and hope and inspiration. Such is Coleridge, a man of grief who makes the world glad.

Life- In 1772 there lived in Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, a queer little man, the Rev. John Coleridge, vicar of the parish church and master of the local grammar school. In the former capacity he preached profound sermons, quoting to open-mouthed rustics long passages from the Hebrew, which he told them was the very tongue of the Holy Ghost. In the latter capacity he wrote for his boys a new Latin grammar, to mitigate some of the difficulties of traversing that terrible jungle by means of ingenious bypaths and short cuts. For instance, when his boys found the ablative a somewhat difficult case to understand, he told them to think of it as the *quale-quare-quidditive* case, which of course makes its meaning perfectly clear. In both these capacities the elder Coleridge was a sincere man, gentle and kindly, whose memory was "like a religion" to his sons and daughters. In that same year was born Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the youngest of thirteen children. He was an extraordinarily precocious child, who could read at three years of age, and who, before he was five, had read the Bible and the Arabian Nights, and could remember an astonishing amount from both books. From three to six he attended a "dame" school; and from six till nine (when his father died and left the family destitute) he was in his father's school, learning the classics, reading an enormous quantity of English books, avoiding novels, and delighting in cumbrous theological and metaphysical treatises. At ten he was sent to the Charity School of Christ's Hospital, London, where he met Charles Lamb, who records his impression of the place and of Coleridge in one of his famous essays. Coleridge seems to have remained in this school for seven or eight years without visiting his home,--a poor, neglected boy, whose comforts and entertainments were all within himself. Just as, when a little child, he used to wander over the fields with a stick in his hand, slashing the tops from weeds and thistles, and thinking himself to be the mighty champion of Christendom against the infidels, so now he would lie on the roof of the school, forgetting the play of his fellows and the roar of the London streets, watching the white clouds drifting over and following them in spirit into all sorts of romantic adventures.

At nineteen this hopeless dreamer, who had read more books than an old professor, entered Cambridge as a charity student. He remained for nearly three years, then ran away because of a trifling debt and enlisted in the Dragoons, where he served several months before he was discovered and brought back to the university. He left in 1794 without taking his degree; and presently we find him with the youthful Southey,--a kindred spirit, who had been fired to wild enthusiasm by the French Revolution,--founding his famous Pantisocracy for the regeneration of human society. "The Fall of Robespierre," a poem composed by the two enthusiasts, is full of the new revolutionary spirit. The Pantisocracy, on the banks of the Susquehanna, was to be an ideal community, in which the citizens combined farming and literature; and work was to be limited to two hours each day. Moreover, each member of the community was to marry a good woman, and take her with him. The two poets obeyed the latter injunction first, marrying two sisters, and then found that they had no money to pay even their traveling expenses to the new Utopia.

During all the rest of his career a tragic weakness of will takes possession of Coleridge, making it impossible for him, with all his genius and learning, to hold himself steadily to any one work or purpose. He studied in Germany; worked as a private secretary, till the drudgery wore upon his free spirit; then he went to Rome and remained for two years, lost in study. Later he started *The Friend*, a paper devoted to truth and liberty; lectured on poetry and the fine arts to enraptured audiences in London, until his frequent failures to meet his engagements scattered his hearers; was offered an excellent position and a half interest (amounting to some £2000) in the *Morning Post* and *The Courier*, but declined it, saying "that I would not give up the country and the lazy reading of old folios for two thousand times two thousand pounds,--in short, that beyond £350 a year I considered money a real evil." His family, meanwhile, was almost entirely neglected; he lived apart, following his own way, and the wife and children were left in charge of his friend Southey. Needing money, he was on the point of becoming a Unitarian minister, when a small pension from two friends enabled him to live for a few years without regular employment.

A terrible shadow in Coleridge's life was the apparent cause of most of his dejection. In early life he suffered from neuralgia, and to ease the pain began to use opiates. The result on such a temperament was almost inevitable. He became a slave to the drug habit; his naturally weak will lost all its directing and sustaining force, until, after fifteen years of pain and struggle and despair, he gave up and put himself in charge of a physician, one Mr. Gillman, of High gate. Carlyle, who visited him at this time, calls him "a king of men," but records that "he gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings, a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment."

The shadow is dark indeed; but there are gleams of sunshine that occasionally break through the clouds. One of these is his association with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, in the Quantock hills, out of which came the famous *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798. Another was his loyal devotion to poetry for its own sake. With the exception of his tragedy *Remorse*, which through Byron's influence was accepted at Drury Lane Theater, and for which he was paid £400, he received almost nothing for his poetry. Indeed, he seems not to have desired it; for he says: "Poetry has been to me its own exceeding great reward; it has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude, and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me." One can better understand his exquisite verse after such a declaration. A third ray of sunlight came from the admiration of his contemporaries; for though he wrote comparatively little, he was by his talents and learning a leader among literary men, and his conversations were as eagerly listened to as were those of Dr. Johnson.

Wordsworth says of him that, though other men of the age had done some wonderful things, Coleridge was the only wonderful man he had ever known. Of his lectures on literature a contemporary says: "His words seem to flow as from a person repeating with grace and energy some delightful poem." And of his conversation it is recorded: "Throughout a long-drawn summer's day would this man talk to you in low, equable but clear and musical tones, concerning things human and divine; marshalling all history, harmonizing all experiment, probing the depths of your consciousness, and revealing visions of glory and terror to the imagination."

The last bright ray of sunlight comes from Coleridge's own soul, from the gentle, kindly nature which made men love and respect him in spite of his weaknesses, and which caused Lamb to speak of him humorously as "an archangel a little damaged." The universal law of suffering seems to be that it refines and softens humanity; and Coleridge was no exception to the law. In his poetry we find a note of human sympathy, more tender and profound than can be found in Wordsworth or, indeed, in any other of the great English poets. Even in his later poems, when he has lost his first inspiration and something of the splendid imaginative power that makes his work equal to the best of Blake's, we find a soul tender, triumphant, quiet, "in the stillness of a great peace." He died in 1834, and was buried in High gate Church. The last stanza of the boatman's song, in *Remorse*, serves better to express the world's judgment than any epitaph:

Hark! the cadence dies away
On the quiet moon-lit sea;
The boatmen rest their oars and say,
Miserere Domini!

Works of Coleridge. The works of Coleridge naturally divide themselves into three classes,--the poetic, the critical, and the philosophical, corresponding to the early, the middle, and the later periods of his career. Of his poetry Stopford Brooke well says: "All that he did excellently might be bound up in twenty pages, but it should be bound in pure gold." His early poems show the influence of Gray and Blake, especially of the latter. When Coleridge begins his "Day Dream" with the line, "My eyes make pictures when they're shut," we recall instantly Blake's haunting *Songs of Innocence*. But there is this difference between the two poets,--in Blake we have only a dreamer; in Coleridge we have the rare combination of the dreamer and the profound scholar. The quality of this early poetry, with its strong suggestion of Blake, may be seen in such poems as "A Day Dream," "The Devil's Thoughts," "The Suicide's Argument," and "The Wanderings of Cain." His later poems, wherein we see his imagination bridled by thought and study, but still running very freely, may best be appreciated in "Kubla Khan," "Christabel," and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." It is difficult to criticise such poems; one can only read them and wonder at their melody, and at the vague suggestions which they conjure up in the mind. "Kubla Khan" is a fragment, painting a gorgeous Oriental dream picture, such as one might see in an October sunset. The whole poem came to Coleridge one morning when he had fallen asleep over Purchas, and upon awakening he began to write hastily,

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

He was interrupted after fifty-four lines were written, and he never finished the poem. "Christabel" is also a fragment, which seems to have been planned as the story of a pure young girl who fell under the spell of a sorcerer, in the shape of the woman Geraldine.

It is full of a strange melody, and contains many passages of exquisite poetry; but it trembles with a strange, unknown horror, and so suggests the supernatural terrors of the popular hysterical novels, to which we have referred. On this account it is not wholesome reading; though one flies in the face of Swinburne and of other critics by venturing to suggest such a thing.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is Coleridge's chief contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798, and is one of the world's masterpieces. Though it introduces the reader to a supernatural realm, with a phantom ship, a crew of dead men, the overhanging curse of the albatross, the polar spirit, and the magic breeze, it nevertheless manages to create a sense of absolute reality concerning these manifest absurdities. All the mechanisms of the poem, its meter, rime, and melody are perfect; and some of its descriptions of the lonely sea have never been equaled. Perhaps we should say suggestions, rather than descriptions; for Coleridge never describes things, but makes a suggestion, always brief and always exactly right, and our own imagination instantly supplies the details. It is useless to quote fragments; one must read the entire poem, if he reads nothing else of the romantic school of poetry.

Among Coleridge's shorter poems there is a wide variety, and each reader must be left largely to follow his own taste. The beginner will do well to read a few of the early poems, to which we have referred, and then try the "Ode to France," "Youth and Age," "Dejection," "Love Poems," "Fears in Solitude," "Religious Musings," "Work Without Hope," and the glorious "Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni." One exquisite little poem from the Latin, "The Virgin's Cradle Hymn," and his version of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, show Coleridge's remarkable power as a translator. The latter is one of the best poetical translations in our literature.

Prose WorksOf Coleridge's prose works, the *Biographia, Literaria, or Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* (1817), his collected *Lectures on Shakespeare* (1849), and *Aids to Reflection* (1825) are the most interesting from a literary view point. The first is an explanation and criticism of Wordsworth's theory of poetry, and contains more sound sense and illuminating ideas on the general subject of poetry than any other book in our language. The *Lectures*, as refreshing as a west wind in midsummer, are remarkable for their attempt to sweep away the arbitrary rules which for two centuries had stood in the way of literary criticism of Shakespeare, in order to study the works themselves. No finer analysis and appreciation of the master's genius has ever been written. In his philosophical work Coleridge introduced the idealistic philosophy of Germany into England. He set himself in line with Berkeley, and squarely against Bentham, Malthus, Mill, and all the materialistic tendencies which were and still are the bane of English philosophy. The *Aids to Reflection* is Coleridge's most profound work, but is more interesting to the student of religion and philosophy than to the readers of literature.

(ROBERT SOUTHEY 1774-1843)

Closely associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge is Robert Southey; and the three, on account of their residence in the northern lake district, were referred to contemptuously as the "Lakers" by the Scottish magazine reviewers. Southey holds his place in this group more by personal association than by his literary gifts. He was born at Bristol, in 1774; studied at Westminster School, and at Oxford, where he found himself in perpetual conflict with the authorities on account of his independent views. He finally left the university and joined Coleridge in his scheme of a Pantisocracy. For more than fifty years he labored steadily at literature, refusing to consider any other occupation. He considered himself seriously as one of the greatest writers of the day, and a reading of his ballads--which connected him at once with the romantic school--leads us to think that, had he written less, he might possibly have justified his own opinion of himself.

Unfortunately he could not wait for inspiration, being obliged to support not only his own family but also, in large measure, that of his friend Coleridge.

Works of SoutheySouthey gradually surrounded himself with one of the most extensive libraries in England, and set himself to the task of of writing something every working day. The results of his industry were one hundred and nine volumes, besides some hundred and fifty articles for the magazines, most of which are now utterly forgotten. His most ambitious poems are *Thalaba*, a tale of Arabian enchantment; *The Curse of Kehama*, a medley of Hindoo mythology; *Madoc*, a legend of a Welsh prince who discovered the western world; and *Roderick*, a tale of the last of the Goths. All these, and many more, although containing some excellent passages, are on the whole exaggerated and unreal, both in manner and in matter. Southey wrote far better prose than poetry, and his admirable *Life of Nelson* is still often read. Besides these are his *Lives of British Admirals*, his lives of Cowper and Wesley, and his histories of Brazil and of the Peninsular War.

Southey was made Poet Laureate in 1813, and was the first to raise that office from the low estate into which it had fallen since the death of Dryden. The opening lines of Thalaba, beginning,

How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air,

are still sometimes quoted; and a few of his best known short poems, like "The Scholar," "Auld Cloots," "The Well of St. Keyne," "The Inchcape Rock," and "Lodore," will repay the curious reader. The beauty of Southey's character, his patience and helpfulness, make him a worthy associate of the two greater poets with whom he is generally named.

WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

We have already called attention to two significant movements of the eighteenth century, which we must for a moment recall if we are to appreciate Scott, not simply as a delightful teller of tales, but as a tremendous force in modern literature. The first is the triumph of romantic poetry in Wordsworth and Coleridge; the second is the success of our first English novelists, and the popularization of literature by taking it from the control of a few patrons and critics and putting it into the hands of the people as one of the forces which mold our modern life. Scott is an epitome of both these movements. The poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge was read by a select few, but Scott's *Marmion* and *Lady of the Lake* aroused a whole nation to enthusiasm, and for the first time romantic poetry became really popular. So also the novel had been content to paint men and women of the present, until the wonderful series of Waverley novels appeared, when suddenly, by the magic of this "Wizard of the North," all history seemed changed. The past, which had hitherto appeared as a dreary region of dead heroes, became alive again, and filled with a multitude of men and women who had the surprising charm of reality. It is of small consequence that Scott's poetry and prose are both faulty; that his poems are read chiefly for the story, rather than for their poetic excellence; and that much of the evident crudity and barbarism of the Middle Ages is ignored or forgotten in Scott's writings. By their vigor, their freshness, their rapid action, and their breezy, out-of-door atmosphere, Scott's novels attracted thousands of readers who else had known nothing of the delights of literature. He is, therefore, the greatest known factor in establishing and in popularizing that romantic element in prose and poetry which has been for a hundred years the chief characteristic of our literature.

Life- Scott was born in Edinburgh, on August 15, 1771. On both his mother's and father's side he was descended from old Border families, distinguished more for their feuds and fighting than for their intellectual attainments. His father was a barrister, a just man, who often lost clients by advising them to be, first of all, honest in their lawsuits.

His mother was a woman of character and education, strongly imaginative, a teller of tales which stirred young Walter's enthusiasm by revealing the past as a world of living heroes.

As a child, Scott was lame and delicate, and was therefore sent away from the city to be with his grandmother in the open country at Sandy Knowe, in Roxburghshire, near the Tweed. This grandmother was a perfect treasure-house of legends concerning the old Border feuds. From her wonderful tales Scott developed that intense love of Scottish history and tradition which characterizes all his work.

By the time he was eight years old, when he returned to Edinburgh, Scott's tastes were fixed for life. At the high school he was a fair scholar, but without enthusiasm, being more interested in Border stories than in the text-books. He remained at school only six or seven years, and then entered his father's office to study law, at the same time attending lectures at the university. He kept this up for some six years without developing any interest in his profession, not even when he passed his examinations and was admitted to the Bar, in 1792. After nineteen years of desultory work, in which he showed far more zeal in gathering Highland legends than in gaining clients, he had won two small legal offices which gave him enough income to support him comfortably. His home, meanwhile, was at Ashestiel on the Tweed, where all his best poetry was written.

Scott's literary work began with the translation from the German of Bürger's romantic ballad of *Lenore* (1796) and of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1799); but there was romance enough in his own loved Highlands, and in 1802-1803 appeared three volumes of his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, which he had been collecting for many years. In 1805, when Scott was 34 years old, appeared his first original work, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Its success was immediate, and when *Marmion*(1808) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) aroused Scotland and England to intense enthusiasm, and brought unexpected fame to the author,--without in the least spoiling his honest and lovable nature,--Scott gladly resolved to abandon the law, in which he had won scant success, and give himself wholly to literature. Unfortunately, however, in order to increase his earnings, he entered secretly into partnership with the firms of Constable and the brothers Ballantyne, as printer-publishers,--a sad mistake, indeed, and the cause of that tragedy which closed the life of Scotland's greatest writer.

The year 1811 is remarkable for two things in Scott's life. In this year he seems to have realized that, notwithstanding the success of his poems, he had not yet "found himself"; that he was not a poetic genius, like Burns; that in his first three poems he had practically exhausted his material, though he still continued to write verse; and that, if he was to keep his popularity, he must find some other work. The fact that, only a year later, Byron suddenly became the popular favorite, shows how correctly Scott had judged himself and the reading public, which was even more fickle than usual in this emotional age. In that same year, 1811, Scott bought the estate of Abbotsford, on the Tweed, with which place his name is forever associated. Here he began to spend large sums, and to dispense the generous hospitality of a Scotch laird, of which he had been dreaming for years. In 1820 he was made a baronet; and his new title of Sir Walter came nearer to turning his honest head than had all his literary success. His business partnership was kept secret, and during all the years when the Waverley novels were the most popular books in the world, their authorship remained unknown; for Scott deemed it beneath the dignity of his title to earn money by business or literature, and sought to give the impression that the enormous sums spent at Abbotsford in improving the estate and in entertaining lavishly were part of the dignity of the position and came from ancestral sources.

It was the success of Byron's *Childe Harold*, and the comparative failure of Scott's later poems, *Rokeby*, *The Bridal of Triermain*, and *The Lord of the Isles*, which led our author into the new field, where he was to be without a rival. Rummaging through a cabinet one day in search of some fishing tackle, Scott found the manuscript of a story which he had begun and laid aside nine years before. He read this old story eagerly, as if it had been another's work; finished it within three weeks, and published it without signing his name. The success of this first novel, *Waverley* (1814), was immediate and unexpected. Its great sales and the general chorus of praise for its unknown author were without precedent; and when *Guy Mannering, The Antiquary, Black Dwarf, Old Mortality, Rob Roy*, and *The Heart of Midlothian*appeared within the next four years, England's delight and wonder knew no bounds. Not only at home, but also on the Continent, large numbers of these fresh and fascinating stories were sold as fast as they could be printed.

During the seventeen years which followed the appearance of *Waverley*, Scott wrote on an average nearly two novels per year, creating an unusual number of characters and illustrating many periods of Scotch, English, and French history, from the time of the Crusades to the fall of the Stuarts. In addition to these historical novels, he wrote *Tales of a Grandfather, Demonology and Witchcraft*, biographies of Dryden and of Swift, the *Life of Napoleon*, in nine volumes, and a large number of articles for the reviews and magazines. It was an extraordinary amount of literary work, but it was not quite so rapid and spontaneous as it seemed. He had been very diligent in looking up old records, and we must remember that, in nearly all his poems and novels, Scott was drawing upon a fund of legend, tradition, history, and poetry, which he had been gathering for forty years, and which his memory enabled him to produce at will with almost the accuracy of an encyclopedia.

ABBOTSFORD

For the first six years Scott held himself to Scottish history, giving us in nine remarkable novels the whole of Scotland, its heroism, its superb faith and enthusiasm, and especially its clannish loyalty to its hereditary chiefs; giving us also all parties and characters, from Covenanters to Royalists, and from kings to beggars. After reading these nine volumes we know Scotland and Scotchmen as we can know them in no other way. In 1819 he turned abruptly from Scotland, and in *Ivanhoe*, the most popular of his works, showed what a mine of neglected wealth lay just beneath the surface of English history. It is hard to realize now, as we read its rapid, melodramatic action, its vivid portrayal of Saxon and Norman character, and all its picturesque details, that it was written rapidly, at a time when the author was suffering from disease and could hardly repress an occasional groan from finding its way into the rapid dictation. It stands to-day as the best example of the author's own theory that the will of a man is enough to hold him steadily, against all obstacles, to the task of "doing what he has a mind to do." *Kenilworth, Nigel, Peveril*, and*Woodstock*, all written in the next few years, show his grasp of the romantic side of English annals; *Count Robert* and *The Talisman* show his enthusiasm for the heroic side of the Crusaders' nature; and *Quentin Durward*and *Anne of Geierstein* suggest another mine of romance which he discovered in French history.

For twenty years Scott labored steadily at literature, with the double object of giving what was in him, and of earning large sums to support the lavish display which he deemed essential to a laird of Scotland. In 1826, while he was blithely at work on *Woodstock*, the crash came. Not even the vast earnings of all these popular novels could longer keep the wretched business of Ballantyne on its feet, and the firm failed, after years of mismanagement. Though a silent partner, Scott assumed full responsibility, and at fifty-five years of age, sick, suffering, and with all his best work behind him, he found himself facing a debt of over half a million dollars.

The firm could easily have compromised with its creditors; but Scott refused to hear of bankruptcy laws under which he could have taken refuge. He assumed the entire debt as a personal one, and set resolutely to work to pay every penny. Times were indeed changed in England when, instead of a literary genius starving until some wealthy patron gave him a pension, this man, aided by his pen alone, could confidently begin to earn that enormous amount of money. And this is one of the unnoticed results of the popularization of literature. Without a doubt Scott would have accomplished the task, had he been granted only a few years of health. He still lived at Abbotsford, which he had offered to his creditors, but which they generously refused to accept; and in two years, by miscellaneous work, had paid some two hundred thousand dollars of his debt, nearly half of this sum coming from his *Life of Napoleon*. A new edition of the Waverley novels appeared, which was very successful financially, and Scott had every reason to hope that he would soon face the world owing no man a penny, when he suddenly broke under the strain. In 1830 occurred a stroke of paralysis from which he never fully recovered; though after a little time he was again at work, dictating with splendid patience and resolution. He writes in his diary at this time: "The blow is a stunning one, I suppose, for I scarcely feel it. It is singular, but it comes with as little surprise as if I had a remedy ready, yet God knows I am at sea in the dark, and the vessel leaky."

It is good to remember that governments are not always ungrateful, and to record that, when it became known that a voyage to Italy might improve Scott's health, the British government promptly placed a naval vessel at the disposal of a man who had led no armies to the slaughter, but had only given pleasure to multitudes of peaceable men and women by his stories. He visited Malta, Naples, and Rome; but in his heart he longed for Scotland, and turned homeward after a few months of exile. The river Tweed, the Scotch hills, the trees of Abbotsford, the joyous clamor of his dogs, brought forth the first exclamation of delight which had passed Scott's lips since he sailed away. He died in September of the same year, 1832, and was buried with his ancestors in the old Dryburgh Abbey.

Works of Scott- Scott's work is of a kind which the critic gladly passes over, leaving each reader to his own joyous and uninstructed opinion. From a literary view point the works are faulty enough, if one is looking for faults; but it is well to remember that they were intended to give delight, and that they rarely fail of their object. When one has read the stirring *Marmion* or the more enduring *Lady of the Lake*, felt the heroism of the Crusaders in *The Talisman*, the picturesqueness of chivalry in*Ivanhoe*, the nobleness of soul of a Scotch peasant girl in *The Heart of Midlothian*, and the quality of Scotch faith in *Old Mortality*, then his own opinion of Scott's genius will be of more value than all the criticisms that have ever been written.

Scott's PoetryAt the outset we must confess frankly that Scott's poetry is not artistic, in the highest sense, and that it lacks the deeply imaginative and suggestive qualities which make a poem the noblest and most enduring work of humanity. We read it now, not for its poetic excellence, but for its absorbing story interest. Even so, it serves an admirable purpose. *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*, which are often the first long poems read by the beginner in literature, almost invariably lead to a deeper interest in the subject; and many readers owe to these poems an introduction to the delights of poetry. They are an excellent beginning, therefore, for young readers, since they are almost certain to hold the attention, and to lead indirectly to an interest in other and better poems. Aside from this, Scott's poetry is marked by vigor and youthful abandon; its interest lies in its vivid pictures, its heroic characters, and especially in its rapid action and succession of adventures, which hold and delight us still, as they held and delighted the first wondering readers. And one finds here and there terse descriptions, or snatches of song and ballad, like the "Boat Song" and "Lochinvar," which are among the best known in our literature.

Scott's NovelsIn his novels Scott plainly wrote too rapidly and too much. While a genius of the first magnitude, the definition of genius as "the infinite capacity for taking pains" hardly belongs to him. For details of life and history, for finely drawn characters, and for tracing the logical consequences of human action, he has usually no inclination. He sketches a character roughly, plunges him into the midst of stirring incidents, and the action of the story carries us on breathlessly to the end. So his stories are largely adventure stories, at the best; and it is this element of adventure and glorious action, rather than the study of character, which makes Scott a perennial favorite of the young. The same element of excitement is what causes mature readers to turn from Scott to better novelists, who have more power to delineate human character, and to create, or discover, a romantic interest in the incidents of everyday life rather than in stirring adventure.

Scott's Work for Literature Not withstanding these limitations, it is well--especially in these days, when we hear that Scott is outgrown--to emphasize four noteworthy things that he accomplished.

(1) He created the historical novel; and all novelists of the last century who draw upon history for their characters and events are followers of Scott and acknowledge his mastery.

(2) His novels are on a vast scale, covering a very wide range of action, and are concerned with public rather than with private interests. So, with the exception of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the love story in his novels is generally pale and feeble; but the strife and passions of big parties are magnificently portrayed. A glance over even the titles of his novels shows how the heroic side of history for over six hundred years finds expression in his pages; and all the parties of these six centuries--Crusaders, Covenanters, Cavaliers, Roundheads, Papists, Jews, Gypsies, Rebels--start into life again, and fight or give a reason for the faith that is in them. No other novelist in England, and only Balzac in France, approaches Scott in the scope of his narratives.

(3) Scott was the first novelist in any language to make the scene an essential element in the action. He knew Scotland, and loved it; and there is hardly an event in any of his Scottish novels in which we do not breathe the very atmosphere of the place, and feel the presence of its moors and mountains. The place, morever, is usually so well chosen and described that the action seems almost to be the result of natural environment. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this harmony between scene and incident is found in *Old Mortality*, where Morton approaches the cave of the old Covenanter, and where the spiritual terror inspired by the fanatic's struggle with imaginary fiends is paralleled by the physical terror of a gulf and a roaring flood spanned by a slippery tree trunk. A second illustration of the same harmony of scene and incident is found in the meeting of the arms and ideals of the East and West, when the two champions fight in the burning desert, and then eat bread together in the cool shade of the oasis, as described in the opening chapter of *The Talisman*. A third illustration is found in that fascinating love scene, where Ivanhoe lies wounded, raging at his helplessness, while the gentle Rebecca alternately hides and reveals her love as she describes the terrific assault on the castle, which goes on beneath her window. His thoughts are all on the fight; hers on the man she loves; and both are natural, and both are exactly what we expect under the circumstances. These are but striking examples of the fact that, in all his work, Scott tries to preserve perfect harmony between the scene and the action.

(4) Scott's chief claim to greatness lies in the fact that he was the first novelist to recreate the past; that he changed our whole conception of history by making it to be, not a record of dry facts, but a stage on which living men and women played their parts. Carlyle's criticism is here most pertinent:

"These historical novels have taught this truth ... unknown to writers of history: that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state papers, controversies, and abstractions of men." Not only the pages of history, but all the hills and vales of his beloved Scotland are filled with living characters,--lords and ladies, soldiers, pirates, gypsies, preachers, schoolmasters, clansmen, bailiffs, dependents,--all Scotland is here before our eyes, in the reality of life itself. It is astonishing, with his large numbers of characters, that Scott never repeats himself. Naturally he is most at home in Scotland, and with humble people. Scott's own romantic interest in feudalism caused him to make his lords altogether too lordly; his aristocratic maidens are usually bloodless, conventional, exasperating creatures, who talk like books and pose like figures in an old tapestry. But when he describes characters like Jeanie Deans, in *The Heart of Midlothian*, and the old clansman, Evan Dhu, in *Waverley*, we know the very soul of Scotch womanhood and manhood. Perhaps one thing more should be said, or rather repeated, of Scott's enduring work. He is always sane, wholesome, manly, inspiring. We know the essential nobility of human life better, and we are better men and women ourselves, because of what he has written.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824)

There are two distinct sides to Byron and his poetry, one good, the other bad; and those who write about him generally describe one side or the other in superlatives. Thus one critic speaks of his "splendid and imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength"; another of his "gaudy charlatanry, blare of brass, and big bow-wowishness." As both critics are fundamentally right, we shall not here attempt to reconcile their differences, which arise from viewing one side of the man's nature and poetry to the exclusion of the other. Before his exile from England, in 1816, the general impression made by Byron is that of a man who leads an irregular life, poses as a romantic hero, makes himself out much worse than he really is, and takes delight in shocking not only the conventions but the ideals of English society. His poetry of this first period is generally, though not always, shallow and insincere in thought, and declamatory or bombastic in expression. After his exile, and his meeting with Shelley in Italy, we note a gradual improvement, due partly to Shelley's influence and partly to his own mature thought and experience. We have the impression now of a disillusioned man who recognizes his true character, and who, though cynical and pessimistic, is at least honest in his unhappy outlook on society. His poetry of this period is generally less shallow and rhetorical, and though he still parades his feelings in public, he often surprises us by being manly and sincere. Thus in the third canto of *Childe Harold*, written just after his exile, he says:

In my youth's summer I did sing of one,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;

and as we read on to the end of the splendid fourth canto--with its poetic feeling for nature, and its stirring rhythm that grips and holds the reader like martial music--we lay down the book with profound regret that this gifted man should have devoted so much of his talent to describing trivial or unwholesome intrigues and posing as the hero of his own verses. The real tragedy of Byron's life is that he died just as he was beginning to find himself.

Life- Byron was born in London in 1788, the year preceding the French Revolution. We shall understand him better, and judge him more charitably, if we remember the tainted stock from which he sprang. His father was a dissipated spendthrift of unspeakable morals; his mother was a Scotch heiress, passionate and unbalanced. The father deserted his wife after squandering her fortune; and the boy was brought up by the mother who "alternately petted and abused" him. In his eleventh year the death of a granduncle left him heir to Newstead Abbey and to the baronial title of one of the oldest houses in England.

He was singularly handsome; and a lameness resulting from a deformed foot lent a suggestion of pathos to his make-up. All this, with his social position, his pseudo-heroic poetry, and his dissipated life,--over which he contrived to throw a veil of romantic secrecy,--made him a magnet of attraction to many thoughtless young men and foolish women, who made the downhill path both easy and rapid to one whose inclinations led him in that direction. Naturally he was generous, and easily led by affection. He is, therefore, largely a victim of his own weakness and of unfortunate surroundings.

At school at Harrow, and in the university at Cambridge, Byron led an unbalanced life, and was more given to certain sports from which he was not debarred by lameness, than to books and study. His school life, like his infancy, is sadly marked by vanity, violence, and rebellion against every form of authority; yet it was not without its hours of nobility and generosity. Scott describes him as "a man of real goodness of heart, and the kindest and best feelings, miserably thrown away by his foolish contempt of public opinion." While at Cambridge, Byron published his first volume of poems, *Hours of Idleness*, in 1807. A severe criticism of the volume in the *Edinburgh Review* wounded Byron's vanity, and threw him into a violent passion, the result of which was the now famous satire called *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in which not only his enemies, but also Scott, Wordsworth, and nearly all the literary men of his day, were satirized in heroic couplets after the manner of Pope's *Dunciad*. It is only just to say that he afterwards made friends with Scott and with others whom he had abused without provocation; and it is interesting to note, in view of his own romantic poetry, that he denounced all masters of romance and accepted the artificial standards of Pope and Dryden. His two favorite books were the Old Testament and a volume of Pope's poetry. Of the latter he says, "His is the greatest name in poetry ... all the rest are barbarians."

In 1809 Byron, when only twenty-one years of age, started on a tour of Europe and the Orient. The poetic results of this trip were the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, with their famous descriptions of romantic scenery. The work made him instantly popular, and his fame overshadowed Scott's completely. As he says himself, "I awoke one morning to find myself famous," and presently he styles himself "the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme." The worst element in Byron at this time was his insincerity, his continual posing as the hero of his poetry. His best works were translated, and his fame spread almost as rapidly on the Continent as in England. Even Goethe was deceived, and declared that a man so wonderful in character had never before appeared in literature, and would never appear again. Now that the tinsel has worn off, and we can judge the man and his work dispassionately, we see how easily even the critics of the age were governed by romantic impulses.

The adulation of Byron lasted only a few years in England. In 1815 he married Miss Milbanke, an English heiress, who abruptly left him a year later. With womanly reserve she kept silence; but the public was not slow to imagine plenty of reasons for the separation. This, together with the fact that men had begun to penetrate the veil of romantic secrecy with which Byron surrounded himself and found a rather brassy idol beneath, turned the tide of public opinion against him. He left England under a cloud of distrust and disappointment, in 1816, and never returned. Eight years were spent abroad, largely in Italy, where he was associated with Shelley until the latter's tragic death in 1822. His house was ever the meeting place for Revolutionists and malcontents calling themselves patriots, whom he trusted too greatly, and with whom he shared his money most generously. Curiously enough, while he trusted men too easily, he had no faith in human society or government, and wrote in 1817: "I have simplified my politics to an utter detestation of all existing governments."

During his exile he finished *Childe Harold, The Prisoner of Chillon*, his dramas *Cain* and *Manfred*, and numerous other works, in some of which, as in *Don Juan*, he delighted in revenging himself upon his countrymen by holding up to ridicule all that they held most sacred.

In 1824 Byron went to Greece to give himself and a large part of his fortune to help that country in its struggle for liberty against the Turks. How far he was led by his desire for posing as a hero, and how far by a certain vigorous Viking spirit that was certainly in him, will never be known. The Greeks welcomed him and made him a leader, and for a few months he found himself in the midst of a wretched squabble of lies, selfishness, insincerity, cowardice, and intrigue, instead of the heroic struggle for liberty which he had anticipated. He died of fever, in Missolonghi, in 1824. One of his last poems, written there on his thirty-sixth birthday, a few months before he died, expresses his own view of his disappointing life:

My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers and fruits of love are gone:
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.

Works of Byron- In reading Byron it is well to remember that he was a disappointed and embittered man, not only in his personal life, but also in his expectation of a general transformation of human society. As he pours out his own feelings, chiefly, in his poetry, he is the most expressive writer of his age in voicing the discontent of a multitude of Europeans who were disappointed at the failure of the French Revolution to produce an entirely new form of government and society.

Hours of Idleness One who wishes to understand the whole scope of Byron's genius and poetry will do well to begin with his first work, *Hours of Idleness*, written when he was a young man at the university. There is very little poetry in the volume, only a striking facility in rime, brightened by the devil-may-care spirit of the Cavalier poets; but as a revelation of the man himself it is remarkable. In a vain and sophomoric preface he declares that poetry is to him an idle experiment, and that this is his first and last attempt to amuse himself in that line. Curiously enough, as he starts for Greece on his last, fatal journey, he again ridicules literature, and says that the poet is a "mere babbler." It is this despising of the art which alone makes him famous that occasions our deepest disappointment. Even in his magnificent passages, in a glowing description of nature or of a Hindoo woman's exquisite love, his work is frequently marred by a wretched pun, or by some cheap buffoonery, which ruins our first splendid impression of his poetry.

Longer Poems Byron's later volumes, *Manfred* and *Cain*, the one a curious, and perhaps unconscious, parody of *Faust*, the other of *Paradise Lost*, are his two best known dramatic works. Aside from the question of their poetic value, they are interesting as voicing Byron's excessive individualism and his rebellion against society. The best known and the most readable of Byron's works *Mazeppa, The Prisoner of Chillon*, and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* (1812) are perhaps more frequently read than any other work of the same author, partly because of their melodious verse, partly because of their descriptions of places along the lines of European travel; but the last two cantos (1816-1818) written after his exile from England, have more sincerity, and are in every way better expressions of Byron's mature genius. Scattered through all his works one finds magnificent descriptions of natural scenery, and exquisite lyrics of love and despair; but they are mixed with such a deal of bombast and rhetoric, together with much that is unwholesome, that the beginner will do well to confine himself to a small volume of well-chosen selections.

Byron is often compared with Scott, as having given to us Europe and the Orient, just as Scott gave us Scotland and its people; but while there is a certain resemblance in the swing and dash of the verses, the resemblance is all on the surface, and the underlying difference between the two poets is as great as that between Thackeray and Bulwer-Lytton. Scott knew his country well,--its hills and valleys which are interesting as the abode of living and lovable men and women. Byron pretended to know the secret, unwholesome side of Europe, which generally hides itself in the dark; but instead of giving us a variety of living men, he never gets away from his own unbalanced and egotistical self. All his characters, in *Cain, Manfred, The Corsair, The Giaour, Childe Harold, Don Juan*, are tiresome repetitions of himself,--a vain, disappointed, cynical man, who finds no good in life or love or anything. Naturally, with such a disposition, he is entirely incapable of portraying a true woman. To nature alone, especially in her magnificent moods, Byron remains faithful; and his portrayal of the night and the storm and the ocean in *Childe Harold* are unsurpassed in our language.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

In this fragment, from the "Ode to the West Wind," we have a suggestion of Shelley's own spirit, as reflected in all his poetry. The very spirit of nature, which appeals to us in the wind and the cloud, the sunset and the moonrise, seems to have possessed him, at times, and made him a chosen instrument of melody. At such times he is a true poet, and his work is unrivaled. At other times, unfortunately, Shelley joins with Byron in voicing a vain rebellion against society. His poetry, like his life, divides itself into two distinct moods. In one he is the violent reformer, seeking to overthrow our present institutions and to hurry the millennium out of its slow walk into a gallop. Out of this mood come most of his longer poems, like *Queen Mab, Revolt of Islam, Hellas*, and *The Witch of Atlas*, which are somewhat violent diatribes against government, priests, marriage, religion, even God as men supposed him to be. In a different mood, which finds expression *Alastor, Adonais*, and his wonderful lyrics, Shelley is like a wanderer following a vague, beautiful vision, forever sad and forever unsatisfied. In the latter mood he appeals profoundly to all men who have known what it is to follow after an unattainable ideal.

Shelley's Life- There are three classes of men who see visions, and all three are represented in our literature. The first is the mere dreamer, like Blake, who stumbles through a world of reality without noticing it, and is happy in his visions. The second is the seer, the prophet, like Langland, or Wyclif, who sees a vision and quietly goes to work, in ways that men understand, to make the present world a little more like the ideal one which he sees in his vision. The third, who appears in many forms,--as visionary, enthusiast, radical, anarchist, revolutionary, call him what you will,--sees a vision and straightway begins to tear down all human institutions, which have been built up by the slow toil of centuries, simply because they seem to stand in the way of his dream. To the latter class belongs Shelley, a man perpetually at war with the present world, a martyr and exile, simply because of his inability to sympathize with men and society as they are, and because of his own mistaken judgment as to the value and purpose of a vision.

Shelley was born in Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex, in 1792. On both his father's and his mother's side he was descended from noble old families, famous in the political and literary history of England.

From childhood he lived, like Blake, in a world of fancy, so real that certain imaginary dragons and headless creatures of the neighboring wood kept him and his sisters in a state of fearful expectancy. He learned rapidly, absorbed the classics as if by intuition, and, dissatisfied with ordinary processes of learning, seems to have sought, like Faustus, the acquaintance of spirits, as shown in his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty":

While yet a boy, I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.

Shelley's first public school, kept by a hard-headed Scotch master, with its floggings and its general brutality, seemed to him like a combination of hell and prison; and his active rebellion against existing institutions was well under way when, at twelve years of age, he entered the famous preparatory school at Eton. He was a delicate, nervous, marvelously sensitive boy, of great physical beauty; and, like Cowper, he suffered torments at the hands of his rough schoolfellows. Unlike Cowper, he was positive, resentful, and brave to the point of rashness; soul and body rose up against tyranny; and he promptly organized a rebellion against the brutal fagging system. "Mad Shelley" the boys called him, and they chivied him like dogs around a little coon that fights and cries defiance to the end. One finds what he seeks in this world, and it is not strange that Shelley, after his Eton experiences, found causes for rebellion in all existing forms of human society, and that he left school "to war among mankind," as he says of himself in the *Revolt of Islam*. His university days are but a repetition of his earlier experiences. While a student at Oxford he read some scraps of Hume's philosophy, and immediately published a pamphlet called "The Necessity of Atheism." It was a crude, foolish piece of work, and Shelley distributed it by post to everyone to whom it might give offense. Naturally this brought on a conflict with the authorities, but Shelley would not listen to reason or make any explanation, and was expelled from the university in 1811.

Shelley's marriage was even more unfortunate. While living in London, on a generous sister's pocket money, a certain young schoolgirl, Harriet Westbrook, was attracted by Shelley's crude revolutionary doctrines. She promptly left school, as her own personal part in the general rebellion, and refused to return or even to listen to her parents upon the subject. Having been taught by Shelley, she threw herself upon his protection; and this unbalanced couple were presently married, as they said, "in deference to anarch custom." The two infants had already proclaimed a rebellion against the institution of marriage, for which they proposed to substitute the doctrine of elective affinity. For two years they wandered about England, Ireland, and Wales, living on a small allowance from Shelley's father, who had disinherited his son because of his ill-considered marriage. The pair soon separated, and two years later Shelley, having formed a strong friendship with one Godwin,--a leader of young enthusiasts and a preacher of anarchy,--presently showed his belief in Godwin's theories by eloping with his daughter Mary. It is a sad story, and the details were perhaps better forgotten. We should remember that in Shelley we are dealing with a tragic blend of high-mindedness and light-headedness. Byron wrote of him, "The most gentle, the most amiable, and the least worldly-minded person I ever met!" Led partly by the general hostility against him, and partly by his own delicate health, Shelley went to Italy in 1818, and never returned to England. After wandering over Italy he finally settled in Pisa, beloved of so many English poets,--beautiful, sleepy Pisa, where one looks out of his window on the main street at the busiest hour of the day, and the only living thing in sight is a donkey, dozing lazily, with his head in the shade and his body in the sunshine.

Here his best poetry was written, and here he found comfort in the friendship of Byron, Hunt, and Trelawney, who are forever associated with Shelley's Italian life. He still remained hostile to English social institutions; but life is a good teacher, and that Shelley dimly recognized the error of his rebellion is shown in the increasing sadness of his later poems:

O world, O life, O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
  Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
  No more--oh, never more!
Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
  Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
  No more--oh, never more!

In 1822, when only thirty years of age, Shelley was drowned while sailing in a small boat off the Italian coast. His body was washed ashore several days later, and was cremated, near Viareggio, by his friends, Byron, Hunt, and Trelawney. His ashes might, with all reverence, have been given to the winds that he loved and that were a symbol of his restless spirit; instead, they found a resting place near the grave of Keats, in the English cemetery at Rome. One rarely visits the spot now without finding English and American visitors standing in silence before the significant inscription, *Cor Cordium*.

Works of Shelley- As a lyric poet, Shelley is one of the supreme geniuses of our literature; and the reader will do well to begin with the poems which show him at his very best. "The Cloud," "To a Skylark," "Ode to the West Wind," "To Night,"--poems like these must surely set the reader to searching among Shelley's miscellaneous works, to find for himself the things "worthy to be remembered."

AlastorIn reading Shelley's longer poems one must remember that there are in this poet two distinct men: one, the wanderer, seeking ideal beauty and forever unsatisfied; the other, the unbalanced reformer, seeking the overthrow of present institutions and the establishment of universal happiness. *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude* (1816) is by far the best expression of Shelley's greater mood. Here we see him wandering restlessly through the vast silences of nature, in search of a loved dream-maiden who shall satisfy his love of beauty. Here Shelley is the poet of the moonrise, and of the tender exquisite fancies that can never be expressed. The charm of the poem lies in its succession of dreamlike pictures; but it gives absolutely no impressions of reality. It was written when Shelley, after his long struggle, had begun to realize that the world was too strong for him. *Alastor* is therefore the poet's confession, not simply of failure, but of undying hope in some better thing that is to come.

Prometheus *Prometheus Unbound* (1818-1820), a lyrical drama, is the best work of Shelley's revolutionary enthusiasm, and the most characteristic of all his poems. Shelley's philosophy (if one may dignify a hopeless dream by such a name) was a curious aftergrowth of the French Revolution, namely, that it is only the existing tyranny of State, Church, and society which keeps man from growth into perfect happiness. Naturally Shelley forgot, like many other enthusiasts, that Church and State and social laws were not imposed upon man from without, but were created by himself to minister to his necessities. In Shelley's poem the hero, Prometheus, represents mankind itself,--a just and noble humanity, chained and tortured by Jove, who is here the personification of human institutions.

In due time Demogorgon (which is Shelley's name for Necessity) overthrows the tyrant Jove and releases Prometheus (Mankind), who is presently united to Asia, the spirit of love and goodness in nature, while the earth and the moon join in a wedding song, and everything gives promise that they shall live together happy ever afterwards.

Shelley here looks forward, not back, to the Golden Age, and is the prophet of science and evolution. If we compare his Titan with similar characters in *Faust* and *Cain*, we shall find this interesting difference,--that while Goethe's Titan is cultured and self-reliant, and Byron's stoic and hopeless, Shelley's hero is patient under torture, seeing help and hope beyond his suffering. And he marries Love that the earth may be peopled with superior beings who shall substitute brotherly love for the present laws and conventions of society. Such is his philosophy; but the beginner will read this poem, not chiefly for its thought, but for its youthful enthusiasm, for its marvelous imagery, and especially for its ethereal music. Perhaps we should add here that *Prometheus* is, and probably always will be, a poem for the chosen few who can appreciate its peculiar spirit like beauty. In its purely pagan conception of the world, it suggests, by contrast, Milton's Christian philosophy in *Paradise Regained*.

Shelley's revolutionary works, *Queen Mab* (1813), *The Revolt of Islam* (1818), *Hellas* (1821), and *The Witch of Atlas* (1820), are to be judged in much the same way as is *Prometheus Unbound*. They are largely invectives against religion, marriage, kingcraft, and priestcraft, most impractical when considered as schemes for reform, but abounding in passages of exquisite beauty, for which alone they are worth reading. In the drama called *The Cenci* (1819), which is founded upon a morbid Italian story, Shelley for the first and only time descends to reality. The heroine, Beatrice, driven to desperation by the monstrous wickedness of her father, kills him and suffers the death penalty in consequence. She is the only one of Shelley's characters who seems to us entirely human.

Adonais Far different in character is *Epipsychidion* (1821), a rhapsody celebrating Platonic love, the most impalpable, and so one of the most characteristic, of all Shelley's works. It was inspired by a beautiful Italian girl, Emilia Viviani, who was put into a cloister against her will, and in whom Shelley imagined he found his long-sought ideal of womanhood. With this should be read *Adonais* (1821), the best known of all Shelley's longer poems. *Adonais* is a wonderful threnody, or a song of grief, over the death of the poet Keats. Even in his grief Shelley still preserves a sense of unreality, and calls in many shadowy allegorical figures,--Sad Spring, Weeping Hours, Glooms, Splendors, Destinies,--all uniting in bewailing the loss of a loved one. The whole poem is a succession of dream pictures, exquisitely beautiful, such as only Shelley could imagine; and it holds its place with Milton's *Lycidas* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam* as one of the three greatest elegies in our language.

Shelley and Wordsworth In his interpretation of nature Shelley suggests Wordsworth, both by resemblance and by contrast. To both poets all natural objects are symbols of truth; both regard nature as permeated by the great spiritual life which animates all things; but while Wordsworth finds a spirit of thought, and so of communion between nature and the soul of man, Shelley finds a spirit of love, which exists chiefly for its own delight; and so "The Cloud," "The Skylark," and "The West Wind," three of the most beautiful poems in our language, have no definite message for humanity. In his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" Shelley is most like Wordsworth; but in his "Sensitive Plant," with its fine symbolism and imagery, he is like nobody in the world but himself. Comparison is sometimes an excellent thing; and if we compare Shelley's exquisite "Lament," beginning "O world, O life, O time," with Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality," we shall perhaps understand both poets better.

Both poems recall many happy memories of youth; both express a very real mood of a moment; but while the beauty of one merely saddens and disheartens us, the beauty of the other inspires us with something of the poet's own faith and hopefulness. In a word, Wordsworth found and Shelley lost himself in nature.

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

Keats was not only the last but also the most perfect of the Romanticists. While Scott was merely telling stories, and Wordsworth reforming poetry or upholding the moral law, and Shelley advocating impossible reforms, and Byron voicing his own egoism and the political discontent of the times, Keats lived apart from men and from all political measures, worshiping beauty like a devotee, perfectly content to write what was in his own heart, or to reflect some splendor of the natural world as he saw or dreamed it to be. He had, moreover, the novel idea that poetry exists for its own sake, and suffers loss by being devoted to philosophy or politics or, indeed, to any cause, however great or small. As he says in "Lamia":

... Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine--
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade.

Partly because of this high ideal of poetry, partly because he studied and unconsciously imitated the Greek classics and the best works of the Elizabethans, Keats's last little volume of poetry is unequaled by the work of any of his contemporaries. When we remember that all his work was published in three short years, from 1817 to 1820, and that he died when only twenty-five years old, we must judge him to be the most promising figure of the early nineteenth century, and one of the most remarkable in the history of literature.

Life. Keats's life of devotion to beauty and to poetry is all the more remarkable in view of his lowly origin. He was the son of a hostler and stable keeper, and was born in the stable of the Swan and Hoop Inn, London, in 1795. One has only to read the rough stable scenes from our first novelists, or even from Dickens, to understand how little there was in such an atmosphere to develop poetic gifts. Before Keats was fifteen years old both parents died, and he was placed with his brothers and sisters in charge of guardians. Their first act seems to have been to take Keats from school at Enfield, and to bind him as an apprentice to a surgeon at Edmonton. For five years he served his apprenticeship, and for two years more he was surgeon's helper in the hospitals; but though skillful enough to win approval, he disliked his work, and his thoughts were on other things. "The other day, during a lecture," he said to a friend, "there came a sunbeam into the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray; and I was off with them to Oberon and fairyland." A copy of Spenser's *Faery Queen*, which had been given him by Charles Cowden Clark, was the prime cause of his abstraction. He abandoned his profession in 1817, and early in the same year published his first volume of *Poems*. It was modest enough in spirit, as was also his second volume, *Endymion* (1818); but that did not prevent brutal attacks upon the author and his work by the self-constituted critics' of *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Quarterly*. It is often alleged that the poet's spirit and ambition were broken by these attacks; but Keats was a man of strong character, and instead of quarreling with his reviewers, or being crushed by their criticism, he went quietly to work with the idea of producing poetry that should live forever.

As Matthew Arnold says, Keats "had flint and iron in him"; and in his next volume he accomplished his own purpose and silenced unfriendly criticism. For the three years during which Keats wrote his poetry he lived chiefly in London and in Hampstead, but wandered at times over England and Scotland, living for brief spaces in the Isle of Wight, in Devonshire, and in the Lake district, seeking to recover his own health, and especially to restore that of his brother. His illness began with a severe cold, but soon developed into consumption; and added to this sorrow was another,--his love for Fannie Brawne, to whom he was engaged, but whom he could not marry on account of his poverty and growing illness. When we remember all this personal grief and the harsh criticism of literary men, the last small volume, *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* (1820), is most significant, as showing not only Keats's wonderful poetic gifts, but also his beautiful and indomitable spirit. Shelley, struck by the beauty and promise of "Hyperion," sent a generous invitation to the author to come to Pisa and live with him; but Keats refused, having little sympathy with Shelley's revolt against society. The invitation had this effect, however, that it turned Keats's thoughts to Italy, whither he soon went in the effort to save his life. He settled in Rome with his friend Severn, the artist, but died soon after his arrival, in February, 1821. His grave, in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, is still an object of pilgrimage to thousands of tourists; for among all our poets there is hardly another whose heroic life and tragic death have so appealed to the hearts of poets and young enthusiasts.

The Work of Keats "None but the master shall praise us; and none but the master shall blame" might well be written on the fly leaf of every volume of Keats's poetry; for never was there a poet more devoted to his ideal, entirely independent of success or failure. In strong contrast with his contemporary, Byron, who professed to despise the art that made him famous, Keats lived for poetry alone, and, as Lowell pointed out, a virtue went out of him into everything he wrote. In all his work we have the impression of this intense loyalty to his art; we have the impression also of a profound dissatisfaction that the deed falls so far short of the splendid dream. Thus after reading Chapman's translation of Homer he writes:

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific--and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise--
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

In this striking sonnet we have a suggestion of Keats's high ideal, and of his sadness because of his own ignorance, when he published his first little volume of poems in 1817. He knew no Greek; yet Greek literature absorbed and fascinated him, as he saw its broken and imperfect reflection in an English translation. Like Shakespeare, who also was but poorly educated in the schools, he had a marvelous faculty of discerning the real spirit of the classics,--a faculty denied to many great scholars, and to most of the "classic" writers of the preceding century,--and so he set himself to the task of reflecting in modern English the spirit of the old Greeks.

The imperfect results of this attempt are seen in his next volume, *Endymion*, which is the story of a young shepherd beloved by a moon goddess. The poem begins with the striking lines:

A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us; and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing,

which well illustrate the spirit of Keats's later work, with its perfect finish and melody. It has many quotable lines and passages, and its "Hymn to Pan" should be read in connection with Wordsworth's famous sonnet beginning, "The world is too much with us." The poem gives splendid promise, but as a whole it is rather chaotic, with too much ornament and too little design, like a modern house. That Keats felt this defect strongly is evident from his modest preface, wherein he speaks of *Endymion*, not as a deed accomplished, but only as an unsuccessful attempt to suggest the underlying beauty of Greek mythology.

Lamia and Other PoemsKeats's third and last volume, *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* (1820), is the one with which the reader should begin his acquaintance with this master of English verse. It has only two subjects, Greek mythology and mediæval romance. "Hyperion" is a magnificent fragment, suggesting the first arch of a cathedral that was never finished. Its theme is the overthrow of the Titans by the young sun-god Apollo. Realizing his own immaturity and lack of knowledge, Keats laid aside this work, and only the pleadings of his publisher induced him to print the fragment with his completed poems.

Throughout this last volume, and especially in "Hyperion," the influence of Milton is apparent, while Spenser is more frequently suggested in reading *Endymion*.

Of the longer poems in the volume, "Lamia" is the most suggestive. It is the story of a beautiful enchantress, who turns from a serpent into a glorious woman and fills every human sense with delight, until, as a result of the foolish philosophy of old Apollonius, she vanishes forever from her lover's sight. "The Eve of St. Agnes," the most perfect of Keats's mediæval poems, is not a story after the manner of the metrical romances, but rather a vivid painting of a romantic mood, such as comes to all men, at times, to glorify a workaday world. Like all the work of Keats and Shelley, it has an element of unreality; and when we read at the end,

And they are gone; aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm,

it is as if we were waking from a dream,--which is the only possible ending to all of Keats's Greek and mediæval fancies. We are to remember, however, that no beautiful thing, though it be intangible as a dream, can enter a man's life and leave him quite the same afterwards. Keats's own word is here suggestive. "The imagination," he said, "may be likened to Adam's dream; he awoke and found it true."

It is by his short poems that Keats is known to the majority of present-day readers. Among these exquisite shorter poems we mention only the four odes, "On a Grecian Urn," "To a Nightingale," "To Autumn," and "To Psyche." These are like an invitation to a feast; one who reads them will hardly be satisfied until he knows more of such delightful poetry. Those who study only the "Ode to a Nightingale" may find four things,--a love of account, when he paused in the crowded street tears would spring to his eyes,--tears of pure pleasure at the abundance of so much good life; and when he wrote, he simply interpreted that crowded human life of joy and sorrow, as Wordsworth interpreted the woods and waters, without any desire to change or to reform them.

He has given us the best pictures we possess of Coleridge, Hazlitt, Landor, Hood, Cowden Clarke, and many more of the interesting men and women of his age; and it is due to his insight and sympathy that the life of those far-off days seems almost as real to us as if we ourselves remembered it. Of all our English essayists he is the most lovable; partly because of his delicate, old-fashioned style and humor, but more because of that cheery and heroic struggle against misfortune which shines like a subdued light in all his writings.

CHARLES LAMB

Life. In the very heart of London there is a curious, old-fashioned place known as the Temple,--an enormous, rambling, apparently forgotten structure, dusty and still, in the midst of the endless roar of the city streets. Originally it was a chapter house of the Knights Templars, and so suggests to us the spirit of the Crusades and of the Middle Ages; but now the building is given over almost entirely to the offices and lodgings of London lawyers. It is this queer old place which, more than all others, is associated with the name of Charles Lamb. "I was born," he says, "and passed the first seven years of my life in the Temple. Its gardens, its halls, its fountain, its river... these are my oldest recollections." He was the son of a poor clerk, or rather servant, of one of the barristers, and was the youngest of seven children, only three of whom survived infancy. Of these three, John, the elder, was apparently a selfish creature, who took no part in the heroic struggle of his brother and sister. At seven years, Charles was sent to the famous "Bluecoat" charity school of Christ's Hospital. Here he remained seven years; and here he formed his lifelong friendship for another poor, neglected boy, whom the world remembers as Coleridge.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, LONDON

When only fourteen years old, Lamb left the charity school and was soon at work as a clerk in the South Sea House. Two years later he became a clerk in the famous India House, where he worked steadily for thirty-three years, with the exception of six weeks, in the winter of 1795-1796, spent within the walls of an asylum. In 1796 Lamb's sister Mary, who was as talented and remarkable as Lamb himself, went violently insane and killed her own mother. For a long time after this appalling tragedy she was in an asylum at Hoxton; then Lamb, in 1797, brought her to his own little house, and for the remainder of his life cared for her with a tenderness and devotion which furnishes one of the most beautiful pages in our literary history. At times the malady would return to Mary, giving sure warning of its terrible approach; and then brother and sister might be seen walking silently, hand in hand, to the gates of the asylum, their cheeks wet with tears. One must remember this, as well as Lamb's humble lodgings and the drudgery of his daily work in the-big commercial house, if he would appreciate the pathos of "The Old Familiar Faces," or the heroism which shines through the most human and the most delightful essays in our language.

When Lamb was fifty years of age the East India Company, led partly by his literary fame following his first *Essays of Elia*, and partly by his thirty-three years of faithful service, granted him a comfortable pension; and happy as a boy turned loose from school he left India House forever to give himself up to literary work. He wrote to Wordsworth, in April, 1825, "I came home *forever* on Tuesday of last week--it was like passing from life into eternity." Curiously enough Lamb seems to lose power after his release from drudgery, and his last essays, published in 1833, lack something of the grace and charm of his earlier work. He died at Edmonton in 1834; and his gifted sister Mary sank rapidly into the gulf from which his strength and gentleness had so long held her back. No literary man was ever more loved and honored by a rare circle of friends; and all who knew him bear witness to the simplicity and goodness which any reader may find for himself between the lines of his essays.

Works- The works of Lamb divide themselves naturally into three periods. First, there are his early literary efforts, including the poems signed "C. L." in Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects* (1796); his romance *Rosamund Gray* (1798); his poetical drama *John Woodvil* (1802); and various other immature works in prose and poetry. This period comes to an end in 1803, when he gave up his newspaper work, especially the contribution of six jokes, puns, and squibs daily to the *Morning Post*at sixpence apiece. The second period was given largely to literary criticism; and the *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807)--written by Charles and Mary Lamb, the former reproducing the tragedies, and the latter the comedies--may be regarded as his first successful literary venture. The book was written primarily for children; but so thoroughly had brother and sister steeped themselves in the literature of the Elizabethan period that young and old alike were delighted with this new version of Shakespeare's stories, and the *Tales* are still regarded as the best of their kind in our literature. In 1808 appeared his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare*. This carried out the splendid critical work of Coleridge, and was the most noticeable influence in developing the poetic qualities of Keats, as shown in his last volume.

Essays of EliaThe third period includes Lamb's criticisms of life, which are gathered together in his *Essays of Elia* (1823), and his *Last Essays of Elia*, which were published ten years later. These famous essays began in 1820 with the appearance of the new *London Magazine* and were continued for many years, such subjects as the "Dissertation on Roast Pig," "Old China," "Praise of Chimney Sweepers," "Imperfect Sympathies," "A Chapter on Ears," "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist," "Mackery End," "Grace Before Meat," "Dream Children," and many others being chosen apparently at random, but all leading to a delightful interpretation of the life of London, as it appeared to a quiet little man who walked unnoticed through its crowded streets. In the first and last essays which we have mentioned, "Dissertation on Roast Pig" and "Dream Children," we have the extremes of Lamb's humor and pathos.

Lamb's style The style of all these essays is gentle, old-fashioned, and irresistibly attractive. Lamb was especially fond of old writers and borrowed unconsciously from the style of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and from Browne's *Religio Medici* and from the early English dramatists. But this style had become a part of Lamb by long reading, and he was apparently unable to express his new thought without using their old quaint expressions. Though these essays are all criticisms or appreciations of the life of his age, they are all intensely personal. In other words, they are an excellent picture of Lamb and of humanity. Without a trace of vanity or self-assertion, Lamb begins with himself, with some purely personal mood or experience, and from this he leads the reader to see life and literature as he saw it. It is this wonderful combination of personal and universal interests, together with Lamb's rare old style and quaint humor, which make the essays remarkable. They continue the best tradition of Addison and Steele, our first great essayists; but their sympathies are broader and deeper, and their humor more delicious than any which preceded them.

THOMAS DE QUINCY (1785-1859)

In De Quincey the romantic element is even more strongly developed than in Lamb, not only in his critical work, but also in his erratic and imaginative life. He was profoundly educated, even more so than Coleridge, and was one of the keenest intellects of the age; yet his wonderful intellect seems always subordinate to his passion for dreaming. Like Lamb, he was a friend and associate of the Lake poets, making his headquarters in Wordsworth's old cottage at Grasmere for nearly twenty years. Here the resemblance ceases, and a marked contrast begins. As a man, Lamb is the most human and lovable of all our essayists; while De Quincey is the most uncanny and incomprehensible.

Lamb's modest works breathe the two essential qualities of sympathy and humor; the greater number of De Quincey's essays, while possessing more or less of both these qualities, are characterized chiefly by their brilliant style. Life, as seen through De Quincey's eyes, is nebulous and chaotic, and there is a suspicion of the fabulous in all that he wrote. Even in *The Revolt of the Tartars* the romantic element is uppermost, and in much of De Quincey's prose the element of unreality is more noticeable than in Shelley's poetry. Of his subject-matter, his facts, ideas, and criticisms, we are generally suspicious; but of his style, sometimes stately and sometimes headlong, now gorgeous as an Oriental dream, now musical as Keats's *Endymion*, and always, even in the most violent contrasts, showing a harmony between the idea and the expression such as no other English writer, with the possible exception of Newman, has ever rivaled,--say what you will of the marvelous brilliancy of De Quincey's style, you have still only half expressed the truth. It is the style alone which makes these essays immortal.

Life- De Quincey was born in Manchester in 1785. In neither his father, who was a prosperous merchant, nor his mother, who was a quiet, unsympathetic woman, do we see any suggestion of the son's almost uncanny genius. As a child he was given to dreams, more vivid and intense but less beautiful than those of the young Blake to whom he bears a strong resemblance. In the grammar school at Bath he displayed astonishing ability, and acquired Greek and Latin with a rapidity that frightened his slow tutors. At fifteen he not only read Greek, but spoke it fluently; and one of his astounded teachers remarked, "That boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one." From the grammar school at Manchester, whither he was sent in 1800, he soon ran away, finding the instruction far below his abilities, and the rough life absolutely intolerable to his sensitive nature. An uncle, just home from India, interceded for the boy lest he be sent back to the school, which he hated; and with an allowance of a guinea a week he started a career of vagrancy, much like that of Goldsmith, living on the open hills, in the huts of shepherds and charcoal burners, in the tents of gypsies, wherever fancy led him. His fear of the Manchester school finally led him to run away to London, where, without money or friends, his life was even more extraordinary than his gypsy wanderings. The details of this vagrancy are best learned in his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, where we meet not simply the facts of his life, but also the confusion of dreams and fancies in the midst of which he wandered like a man lost on the mountains, with storm clouds under his feet hiding the familiar earth. After a year of vagrancy and starvation he was found by his family and allowed to go to Oxford, where his career was marked by the most brilliant and erratic scholarship. When ready for a degree, in 1807, he passed his written tests successfully, but felt a sudden terror at the thought of the oral examination and disappeared from the university, never to return.

It was in Oxford that De Quincey began the use of opium; to relieve the pains of neuralgia, and the habit increased until he was an almost hopeless slave to the drug. Only his extraordinary will power enabled him to break away from the habit, after some thirty years of misery. Some peculiarity of his delicate constitution enabled De Quincey to take enormous quantities of opium, enough to kill several ordinary men; and it was largely opium, working upon a sensitive imagination, which produced his gorgeous dreams, broken by intervals of weakness and profound depression. For twenty years he resided at Grasmere in the companionship of the Lake poets; and here, led by the loss of his small fortune, he began to write, with the idea of supporting his family. In 1821 he published his first famous work, the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, and for nearly forty years afterwards he wrote industriously, contributing to various magazines an astonishing number of essays on a great variety of subjects.

Without thought of literary fame, he contributed these articles anonymously; but fortunately, in 1853, he began to collect his own works, and the last of fourteen volumes was published just after his death.

In 1830, led by his connection with *Blackwood's Magazine*, to which he was the chief contributor, De Quincey removed with his family to Edinburgh, where his erratic genius and his singularly childlike ways produced enough amusing anecdotes to fill a volume. He would take a room in some place unknown to his friends and family; would live in it for a few years, until he had filled it, even to the bath tub, with books and with his own chaotic manuscripts, allowing no one to enter or disturb his den; and then, when the place became too crowded, he would lock the door and go away and take another lodging, where he repeated the same extraordinary performance. He died in Edinburgh in 1859. Like Lamb, he was a small, boyish figure, gentle, and elaborately courteous. Though excessively shy, and escaping as often as possible to solitude, he was nevertheless fond of society, and his wide knowledge and vivid imagination made his conversations almost as prized as those of his friend Coleridge.

Works- De Quincey's works may be divided into two general classes. The first includes his numerous critical articles, and the second his autobiographical sketches. All his works, it must be remembered, were contributed to various magazines, and were hastily collected just before his death. Hence the general impression of chaos which we get from reading them.

Critical essays From a literary view point the most illuminating of De Quincey's critical works is his. *Literary Reminiscences*. This contains brilliant appreciations of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Shelley, Keats, Hazlitt, and Landor, as well as some interesting studies of the literary figures of the age preceding. Among the best of his brilliant critical essays are *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* (1823), which is admirably suited to show the man's critical genius, and *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (1827), which reveals his grotesque humor Other suggestive critical works, if one must choose among such a multitude, are his *Letters to a Young Man*(1823), *Joan of Arc* (1847), *The Revolt of the Tartars* (1840), and *The English Mail-Coach* (1849). In the last-named essay the "Dream Fugue" is one of the most imaginative of all his curious works.

Confessions of an Opium-Eater, etc.Of De Quincey's autobiographical sketches the best known is his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821). This is only partly a record of opium dreams, and its chief interest lies in glimpses it gives us of De Quincey's own life and wanderings. This should be followed by *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845), which is chiefly a record of gloomy and terrible dreams produced by opiates. The most interesting parts of his *Suspiria*, showing De Quincey's marvelous insight into dreams, are those in which we are brought face to face with the strange feminine creations "Levana," "Madonna," "Our Lady of Sighs," and "Our Lady of Darkness." A series of nearly thirty articles which he collected in 1853, called *Autobiographic Sketches*, completes the revelation of the author's own life. Among his miscellaneous works may be mentioned, in order to show his wide range of subjects, *Klosterheim*, a novel, *Logic of Political Economy*, the *Essays on Style and Rhetoric, Philosophy of Herodotus*, and his articles on Goethe, Pope, Schiller, and Shakespeare which he contributed to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

The style of De QuinceyDe Quincey's style is a revelation of the beauty of the English language, and it profoundly influenced Ruskin and other prose writers of the Victorian Age. It has two chief faults,--diffuseness, which continually leads De Quincey away from his object, and triviality, which often makes him halt in the midst of a marvelous paragraph to make some light jest or witticism that has some humor but no mirth in it. Notwithstanding these faults, De Quincey's prose is still among the few supreme examples of style in our language.

Though he was profoundly influenced by the seventeenth-century writers, he attempted definitely to create a new style which should combine the best elements of prose and poetry. In consequence, his prose works are often, like those of Milton, more imaginative and melodious than much of our poetry. He has been well called "the psychologist of style," and as such his works will never be popular; but to the few who can appreciate him he will always be an inspiration to better writing. One has a deeper respect for our English language and literature after reading him.

Secondary Writers of Romanticism One has only to glance back over the authors we have been studying--Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Scott, Lamb, De Quincey--to realize the great change which swept over the life and literature of England in a single half century, under two influences which we now know as the French Revolution in history and the Romantic Movement in literature. In life men had rebelled against the too strict authority of state and society; in literature they rebelled even more vigorously against the bonds of classicism, which had sternly repressed a writer's ambition to follow his own ideals and to express them in his own way. Naturally such an age of revolution was essentially poetic,--only the Elizabethan Age surpasses it in this respect,--and it produced a large number of minor writers, who followed more or less closely the example of its great leaders. Among novelists we have Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Jane Porter, and Susan Ferrier,--all women, be it noted; among the poets, Campbell, Moore, Hogg ("the Ettrick Shepherd"), Mrs. Hemans, Heber, Keble, Hood, and "Ingoldsby" (Richard Barham); and among miscellaneous writers, Sidney Smith, "Christopher North" (John Wilson), Chalmers, Lockhart, Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Hallam, and Landor. Here is an astonishing variety of writers, and to consider all their claims to remembrance would of itself require a volume. Though these are generally classed as secondary writers, much of their work has claims to popularity, and some of it to permanence. Moore's *Irish Melodies*, Campbell's lyrics, Keble's *Christian Year*, and Jane Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and *Scottish Chiefs* have still a multitude of readers, where Keats, Lamb, and De Quincey are prized only by the cultured few; and Hallam's historical and critical works are perhaps better known than those of Gibbon, who nevertheless occupies a larger place in our literature. Among all these writers we choose only two, Jane Austen and Walter Savage Landor, whose works indicate a period of transition from the Romantic to the Victorian Age.

JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817)

We have so lately rediscovered the charm and genius of this gifted young woman that she seems to be a novelist of yesterday, rather than the contemporary of Wordsworth and Coleridge; and few even of her readers realize that she did for the English novel precisely what the Lake poets did for English poetry,--she refined and simplified it, making it a true reflection of English life. Like the Lake poets, she met with scanty encouragement in her own generation. Her greatest novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, was finished in 1797, a year before the appearance of the famous *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge; but while the latter book was published and found a few appreciative readers, the manuscript of this wonderful novel went begging for sixteen years before it found a publisher. As Wordsworth began with the deliberate purpose of making poetry natural and truthful, so Miss Austen appears to have begun writing with the idea of presenting the life of English country society exactly as it was, in opposition to the romantic extravagance of Mrs. Radcliffe and her school. But there was this difference,--that Miss Austen had in large measure the saving gift of humor, which Wordsworth sadly lacked. Maria Edgeworth, at the same time, set a sane and excellent example in her tales of Irish life, *The Absentee* and *Castle Rackrent;* and

Miss Austen followed up the advantage with at least six works, which have grown steadily in value until we place them gladly in the first rank of our novels of common life. It is not simply for her exquisite charm, therefore, that we admire her, but also for her influence in bringing our novels back to their true place as an expression of human life. It is due partly, at least, to her influence that a multitude of readers were ready to appreciate Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford*, and the powerful and enduring work of George Eliot.

Life- Jane Austen's life gives little opportunity for the biographer, unless, perchance, he has something of her own power to show the beauty and charm of commonplace things. She was the seventh child of Rev. George Austen, rector of Steventon, and was born in the parsonage of the village in 1775. With her sisters she was educated at home, and passed her life very quietly, cheerfully, in the doing of small domestic duties, to which love lent the magic lamp that makes all things beautiful. She began to write at an early age, and seems to have done her work on a little table in the family sitting room, in the midst of the family life. When a visitor entered, she would throw a paper or a piece of sewing over her work, and she modestly refused to be known as the author of novels which we now count among our treasured possessions. With the publishers she had little success. *Pride and Prejudice* went begging, as we have said, for sixteen years; and *Northanger Abbey* (1798) was sold for a trivial sum to a publisher, who laid it aside and forgot it, until the appearance and moderate success of *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811. Then, after keeping the manuscript some fifteen years, he sold it back to the family, who found another publisher.

An anonymous article in the *Quarterly Review*, following the appearance of *Emma* in 1815, full of generous appreciation of the charm of the new writer, was the beginning of Jane Austen's fame; and it is only within a few years that we have learned that the friendly and discerning critic was Walter Scott. He continued to be her admirer until her early death; but these two, the greatest writers of fiction in their age, were never brought together. Both were home-loving people, and Miss Austen especially was averse to publicity and popularity. She died, quietly as she had lived, at Winchester, in 1817, and was buried in the cathedral. She was a bright, attractive little woman, whose sunny qualities are unconsciously reflected in all her books.

Works- Very few English writers ever had so narrow a field of work as Jane Austen. Like the French novelists, whose success seems to lie in choosing the tiny field that they know best, her works have an exquisite perfection that is lacking in most of our writers of fiction. With the exception of an occasional visit to the watering place of Bath, her whole life was spent in small country parishes, whose simple country people became the characters of her novels. Her brothers were in the navy, and so naval officers furnish the only exciting elements in her stories; but even these alleged heroes lay aside their imposing martial ways and act like themselves and other people. Such was her literary field, in which the chief duties were of the household, the chief pleasures in country gatherings, and the chief interests in matrimony. Life, with its mighty interests, its passions, ambitions, and tragic struggles, swept by like a great river; while the secluded interests of a country parish went round and round quietly, like an eddy behind a sheltering rock. We can easily understand, therefore, the limitations of Jane Austen; but within her own field she is unequaled. Her characters are absolutely true to life, and all her work has the perfection of a delicate miniature painting. The most widely read of her novels is *Pride and Prejudice;*but three others, *Sense and Sensibility, Emma*, and *Mansfield Park*, have slowly won their way to the front rank of fiction. From a literary view point *Northanger Abbey* is perhaps the best; for in it we find that touch of humor and delicate satire with which this gentle little woman combated the grotesque popular novels of the *Udolpho* type.

Reading any of these works, one is inclined to accept the hearty indorsement of Sir Walter Scott: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bowwow strain I can do myself, like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!"

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864)

While Hazlitt, Lamb, De Quincey, and other romantic critics went back to early English literature for their inspiration, Landor shows a reaction from the prevailing Romanticism by his imitation of the ancient classic writers. His life was an extraordinary one and, like his work, abounded in sharp contrasts. On the one hand, there are his egoism, his unncontrollable anger, his perpetual lawsuits, and the last sad tragedy with his children, which suggests *King Lear* and his daughters; on the other hand there is his steady devotion to the classics and to the cultivation of the deep wisdom of the ancients, which suggests Pindar and Cicero. In his works we find the wild extravagance of *Gebir*, followed by the superb classic style and charm of *Pericles and Aspasia*. Such was Landor, a man of high ideals, perpetually at war with himself and the world.

Life- Lander's stormy life covers the whole period from Wordsworth's childhood to the middle of the Victorian Era. He was the son of a physician, and was born at Warwick, in 1775. From his mother he inherited a fortune; but it was soon scattered by large expenditures and law quarrels; and in his old age, refused help by his own children, only Browning's generosity kept Landor from actual want. At Rugby, and at Oxford, his extreme Republicanism brought him into constant trouble; and his fitting out a band of volunteers to assist the Spaniards against Napoleon, in 1808, allies him with Byron and his Quixotic followers. The resemblance to Byron is even more strikingly shown in the poem *Gebir*, published in 1798, a year made famous by the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

A remarkable change in Lander's life is noticeable in 1821, when, at forty-six years of age, after having lost his magnificent estate of Llanthony Abbey, in Glamorganshire, and after a stormy experience in Como, he settled down for a time at Fiesole near Florence. To this period of calm after storm we owe the classical prose works for which he is famous. The calm, like that at the center of a whirlwind, lasted but a short time, and Landor, leaving his family in great anger, returned to Bath, where he lived alone for more than twenty years. Then, in order to escape a libel suit, the choleric old man fled back to Italy. He died at Florence, in 1864. The spirit of his whole life may be inferred from the defiant farewell which he flung to it:

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
Nature I loved, and next to Nature Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Works- Landor's reaction from Romanticism is all the more remarkable in view of his early efforts, such as *Gebir*, a wildly romantic poem, which rivals any work of Byron or Shelley in its extravagance. Notwithstanding its occasional beautiful and suggestive lines, the work was not and never has been successful; and the same may be said of all his poetical works. His first collection of poems was published in 1795, his last a full half century later, in 1846. In the latter volume, *The Hellenics*,--which included some translations of his earlier Latin poems, called *Idyllia Heroica,*--one has only to read "The Hamadryad," and compare it with the lyrics of the first volume, in order to realize the astonishing literary vigor of a man who published two volumes, a half century apart, without any appreciable diminution of poetical feeling.

In these entire poems one is impressed by the striking and original figures of speech which Landor uses to emphasize his meaning.

It is by his prose works, largely, that Landor has won a place in our literature; partly because of their intrinsic worth, their penetrating thought, and severe classic style; and partly because of their profound influence upon the writers of the present age. The most noted of his prose works are his six volumes of *Imaginary Conversations*(1824-1846). For these conversations Landor brings together, sometimes in groups, sometimes in couples, well-known characters, or rather shadows, from the four corners of the earth and from the remotest ages of recorded history. Thus Diogenes talks with Plato, Æsop with a young slave girl in Egypt, Henry VIII with Anne Boleyn in prison, Dante with Beatrice, Leofric with Lady Godiva,--all these and many others, from Epictetus to Cromwell, are brought together and speak of life and love and death, each from his own view point. Occasionally, as in the meeting of Henry and Anne Boleyn, the situation is tense and dramatic; but as a rule the characters simply meet and converse in the same quiet strain, which becomes, after much reading, somewhat monotonous. On the other hand, one who reads the*Imaginary Conversations* is lifted at once into a calm and noble atmosphere which braces and inspires him, making him forget petty things, like a view from a hilltop. By its combination of lofty thought and severely classic style the book has won, and deserves, a very high place among our literary records.

The same criticism applies to *Pericles and Aspasia*, which is a series of imaginary letters, telling the experiences of Aspasia, a young lady from Asia Minor, who visits Athens at the summit of its fame and glory, in the great age of Pericles. This is, in our judgment, the best worth reading of all Landor's works. One gets from it not only Landor's classic style, but--what is well worth while--a better picture of Greece in the days of its greatness than can be obtained from many historical volumes.

Summary of the Age of Romanticism-This period extends from the war with the colonies, following the Declaration of Independence, in 1776, to the accession of Victoria in 1837, both limits being very indefinite, as will be seen by a glance at the Chronology following. During the first part of the period especially, England was in a continual turmoil, produced by political and economic agitation at home, and by the long wars that covered two continents and the wide sea between them. The mighty changes resulting from these two causes have given this period the name of the Age of Revolution. The storm center of all the turmoil at home and abroad was the French Revolution, which had a profound influence on the life and literature of all Europe. On the Continent the overthrow of Napoleon at Waterloo (1815) apparently checked the progress of liberty, which had started with the French Revolution, but in England the case was reversed. The agitation for popular liberty, which at one time threatened a revolution, went steadily forward till it resulted in the final triumph of democracy, in the Reform Bill of 1832, and in a number of exceedingly important reforms, such as the extension of manhood suffrage, the removal of the last unjust restrictions against Catholics, the establishment of a national system of schools, followed by a rapid increase in popular education, and the abolition of slavery in all English colonies (1833). To this we must add the changes produced by the discovery of steam and the invention of machinery, which rapidly changed England from an agricultural to a manufacturing nation, introduced the factory system, and caused this period to be known as the Age of Industrial Revolution.

The literature of the age is largely poetical in form, and almost entirely romantic in spirit. For, as we have noted, the triumph of democracy in government is generally accompanied by the triumph of romanticism in literature. At first the literature, as shown especially in the early work of Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley, reflected the turmoil of the age and the wild hopes of an ideal democracy occasioned by the French Revolution.

Later the extravagant enthusiasm subsided, and English writers produced so much excellent literature that the age is often called the Second Creative period, the first being the Age of Elizabeth. The six chief characteristics of the age are: the prevalence of romantic poetry; the creation of the historical novel by Scott; the first appearance of women novelists, such as Mrs. Anne Radcliffe, Jane Porter, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen; the development of literary criticism, in the work of Lamb, De Quincey, Coleridge, and Hazlitt; the practical and economic bent of philosophy, as shown in the work of Malthus, James Mill, and Adam Smith; and the establishment of great literary magazines, like the *Edinburgh Review*, the*Quarterly*, *Blackwood's*, and the *Athenaeum*.

In our study we have noted (1) the Poets of Romanticism: the importance of the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798; the life and work of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley, and Keats; (2) the Prose Writers: the novels of Scott; the development of literary criticism; the life and work of the essayists, Lamb, De Quincey, Landor, and of the novelist Jane Austen.

CHRONOLOGY

End of the Eighteenth and Beginning of the Nineteenth Century

	HISTORY		LITERATURE
1760-1820.	George III		
		1770-1850.	Wordsworth
		1771-1832.	Scott
1789-1799.	French Revolution		
		1796-1816.	Jane Austen's novels
		1798.	Lyrical Balads of Wordsworth and Coleridge
1800.	Union of Great Britain and Ireland		
1802.	Colonization of Australia	1802.	Scotts Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border
1805.	Battle of Trafalgar	1805-1817.	Scotts poems
		1807.	Wordsworth's Intimations of Immortality. Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare
1807.	Abolition of slave trade		
1808-1814.	Peninsular War		
		1809-1818.	Byron's Childe Harold
1812.	Second war with United States	1810-1813.	Coleridge's Lectures on Shakespeare
1814.	Congress of Vienna	1814-1831.	Waverley Novels
1815.	Battle of Waterloo		
		1816.	Shelley's Alastor
		1817.	Coleridge's Biographia Literaria
		1817-1820.	Keats's poems
		1818-1820.	Shelley's Prometheus
1819.	First Atlantic steamship		
1820.	George IV (*d*. 1830)	1820.	Wordsworth's Duddon Sonnets
		1820-1833.	Lamb's Essays of Elia
		1821.	De Quincey's Confessions
		1824-1846.	Landor's Imaginary Conversations.
1826.	First Temperance Society		
1829.	Catholic Emancipation Bill		
1830.	William IV (*d*. 1837) First railway	1830.	Tennyson's first poems
		1831.	Scott's last novel
1832.	Reform Bill		
1833.	Emancipation of slaves	1833.	Carlyle's Sartor Resartus Browning's Pauline
1834.	System of national education		
1837.	Victoria (*d*. 1901)		
		1853-1861.	De Quincey's Collected Essays